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WORK AND VOCATION

A DISSERTATION
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INTRODUCTION

The Christian today faces a world of change and turmoil. He lives and works in a time of uncertainty. Highly developed scientific techniques have placed world shattering power into man's hands. Thus, mankind for the first time in history faces the possibility of total extinction by his own hand. Rival ideologies and incompatible views of life and ways of living threaten to engulf men everywhere. Many people throughout the world suffer hardships, starvation, imprisonment, frustration, deprivation and death. Much of the world has a sense of futility and despair which is reflected in many modern novels like Nineteen Eighty-Four and Player Piano.¹ "In our part of the world we enjoy a level of well-being and of freedom which countless others lack, but here too, we live amidst wars and rumors of wars and the perplexity and uncertainty of a world upheaval."²

Amidst this background of uncertainty and despair God summons the church of Jesus Christ to speak plainly about hope, to declare the good news of Jesus Christ. For this reason the World Council of Churches selected

¹ George Orwell, Nineteen Eighty-Four, and Kurt Vonnegut, Player Piano.

² Report of the North American Lay Conference, The Christian and His Daily Work, p. 7.

for its main theme of the Second Assembly, "Christ - the Hope of the World". The hope of Christians is not what we usually mean by 'hope', the strong desire for something which is possible but not certain, rather it is something we wait for confidently because of what we know of God. "Our hope is grounded in one great Event, comprising the incarnation, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In this Event the purpose of God for mankind, foreshadowed in His dealings with Israel and declared by the prophets, found fulfilment, and His Kingdom was inaugurated on earth, to be consummated hereafter."¹ God's acts in history and his act of raising Jesus Christ from the dead are faith's assurance of Christ's victory over sin and death. He is Lord of life and death. The church is called to be the bearer of this hope, the witness of God's mighty acts and workings, and 'the field wherein this glory is to be revealed'. It is called also to act as the instrument through which God will accomplish his purpose. Since Christ is Lord of all life, the church, if it is to be an effective witness to this and a means through which God will carry his purpose to effect, must be concerned with all areas of life and witness in them. To witness to the full Gospel of Christ

¹ World Council of Churches Assembly, The Christian Hope, "Report of the Advisory Commission", p. 14. See this whole report for an excellent statement on the Christian hope.

means to live as Christians in our daily work as well as our leisure and worship.

There is ample evidence that the church has not been effectively fulfilling its mission in this regard. "It is an almost universal conviction revealed in many reports that there exists at present a gulf between Christian preaching and teaching and man's actual experience of life."¹ Yet throughout the West and increasingly so in the East man's daily labour occupies the majority of his waking hours and most of his energy. J.O. Nelson feels that this gulf exists partly because "job life was unwilling to bear the judgment or satisfy the standards of Christian ethical demands ... But the other aspect of how industrial life has molded the Church is that it has made a Sunday faith seem quite adequate to satisfy workers' need."² Unfortunately a great number of Christians are interested in man only as an immortal soul which must be saved, not as a worker. Many show almost complete indifference to the problems of secular work. The major problems of modern industrial work to be examined later also show clearly that there has been little Christian influence and frequently little Christian concern in the field of daily labour.

If the full Gospel of Jesus Christ, who came 'that we might have life and have it more abundantly', is to be

¹ World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 4.

² J.O. Nelson, Work and Vocation, p. 23.

proclaimed we must be concerned about work and its relation to divine vocation, just as we must be concerned about society itself. Oldham agrees with Professor Michel that the social problem in industry is not just a problem within society but that the problem of society itself is involved in the problem of industry.¹ Further if Christianity is to be relevant to the conditions of the world today, if the church is to speak in meaningful terms to the world "the answer forthcoming from Christians must be a vigorous faith in God related to their daily living."² Finally it is the conviction of Christians not only that Christ is the hope of the world but that ultimately he is the only hope of the world. Any real solutions of the problems of modern industrial work must be based on a Christian understanding of man and God. "In short, by a realistic examination of the problems of modern industry and of modern society, we are forced back to the problem of man himself and of religion, which has to do with his ultimate concerns."³ The application of Christian principles to industrial problems will not result in a complete solution, ridding work from all difficulties. Man is too finite and imperfect for that. Christ offers redemption of life and work and by the general acceptance of this gift on faith and the resulting response of dedication

¹ J.H. Oldham, Work in Modern Society, p. 31.

² Report of the North American Lay Conference, op. cit., p. 7.

³ J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 31.

and service the whole area of daily labour might become directed towards God and life, bringing the certainty of ultimate meaning and victory instead of the hopelessness and 'death' that results from moving away from God. It is for these three reasons, the desire to proclaim the full Gospel in all its aspects, the urge to present Christianity in terms relevant to the present age, and a concern for the problems that men face in modern industrial work that a study of the Christian view of work and vocation is important.

We will examine first, the Biblical view of work and vocation because "we acknowledge in Holy Scripture the true witness to God's Word and the sure guide to Christian faith and conduct."¹ The Biblical view of work and vocation recognizes a vital relationship between the two. The development of this relationship between these two themes of work and vocation down through the history of the church to the present secularized condition of work will be briefly traced. It is this gradual but widespread separation of work from divine vocation since the Reformation that has allowed many of the present problems in work to arise. A restoration of work to its proper relationship, along with leisure and worship, to divine vocation is badly needed. Some of the main problems of industrial work will be outlined along with the relevance to them of the Biblical view of work and vocation. Con-

¹ The United Church of Canada, Statement of Faith, Article IX, p. 6.

sidering the wide gap between Christian preaching and practice in daily work there is a need for the church to develop a new strategy. The direction such a strategy should take will be suggested. There are 'signs of hope' that the church is already taking steps in this direction and some of these will be indicated.

CHAPTER I

VOCATION AND WORK IN SCRIPTURE

A. Introduction.

"A book by workers, about workers, for workers,"¹ is how Paul Minear describes the Bible. As has already been stated, the Bible recognizes an important relationship between vocation or calling, in its true sense of a life direction or purpose, and man's daily labour. A relationship obscured today but greatly needed. Before discussing just what Scripture has to say in regard to vocation, daily work and their relationship we will define the Biblical usage of these terms in contrast to our modern usage. Paul Minear analyzes the modern meaning of work into four main circles of usage. First, there is what he calls the "immediate" meaning, simply what a man or woman is hired to do, one's daily job. The "collective" meaning includes "what a particular craft or industry contributes to the functioning of society as a whole". In this sense the 'work of plumbing' and its contribution to society might be contrasted with the 'work of lumbering' and its contribution. "The functioning of the total labour force available in a given economy, in accordance with the demands of that economy", is, according to Minear, the third and most technical usage. Finally the term work is often used today to refer to all activity of man, any

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 33.

purposeful expenditure of energy. This more "inclusive" usage Minear defines as "that universal, agelong activity of man by which he seeks to sustain, to vindicate, to realize that which as man he seeks in life."¹ A different definition of the modern usage of work is made by Dr. John Macdonald.² Work is any activity carried on not for its own sake but for an ulterior motive. It may be distinguished from play not by the type of activity but by the attitude of the person toward the activity. Thus the same activity may be work at first to an individual but later he may grow to so like it and value it that he will carry it on for its own intrinsic value and it becomes play. So we often use the term work to define any activity that is not pleasant or enjoyable but simply necessary. Perhaps this definition reflects modern man's attitude toward daily work.

It is difficult to define the Biblical use of work because the term is used to cover a wide variety of activities from God's to those of a slave. Alan Richardson tells us that the same word is used in the Old Testament to refer to work, effort, labour, toil, service and worship.³ He feels that we can only outline the three principle senses in which the idea of work appears in the Bible; the work of creation (attributed to God alone),

¹ For an excellent section on the definition of work see Paul Minear, chap. I, "Four Meanings of Work", in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit.

² John Macdonald, unpublished lecture.

³ Alan Richardson, The Biblical Doctrine of Work, p. 13.

human work in all its variety of forms, and 'the work of Christ'. Usually, states Minear, the Bible uses the term work in its immediate and inclusive senses outlined above. While it is true that on occasion Biblical writers refer to work in the collective sense especially in dealing with the work of slaves work is never used in its third sense of "the total labour force in the economy as a whole", nor in the sense Dr. Macdonald refers to, as an activity not carried on for its own sake, that brings pleasure. In the Bible then, the term work usually refers either to a man's job, the task by which he earns his living or as in Phil. 2:12,13, 'the working out of one's salvation'. This latter usage is the most common in the Bible. This is the proper work of Christians; to work for the harvest of the Kingdom of God. Man's chief work then, is really God's work. Christians are empowered to do this work by the gift of the Holy Spirit. All our 'works', deeds, thoughts, prayers, worship, service, faith, in so far as they are good at all are strictly the effect of God's working within us.¹ The work of Christians is to be 'ambassadors for Christ' in all they do including their daily labour. Work used in this sense is man's divine vocation.

The term vocation is used quite differently today than in the Bible. Today the idea of vocation or calling, has degenerated to the extent of being almost meaningless.

¹ Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 33; see also 2 Cor. 6:1, Mk. 16:20.

Certainly it has lost most of its religious significance. We use vocation to refer simply to a career or life's work. This is neither the true meaning of vocation or the Biblical usage. W.R. Forrester¹ refers to three dictionary meanings of the term. The New English Dictionary definitions include first, the action of God calling persons or mankind in general to salvation, or the condition of being so called. Second, vocation refers to the action of God in calling persons to a special task usually of a spiritual nature, or the fact of being called or directed toward a career. Third, this dictionary refers to vocation as "the particular mode of life or sphere of action regarded as so determined." The Biblical usage of vocation includes and relates all three of these meanings. In the Bible, as Minear points out, vocation refers to the total inclusive purpose of a man's life, 'the destiny for which and to which he is summoned'. God is always the caller. Through Christ God calls mankind to repentance and salvation. This is using vocation as in the first dictionary definition. Those who respond are called to a special mission, the work of Christ and the work of the Kingdom. This mode of life, the vocation of the church, is perhaps, vocation according to the third dictionary definition. Calhoun feels that this meaning is to summon, to convoke an assembly, to invite.² They are also given gifts by the Holy Spirit and called to be apostles or

¹ W.R. Forrester, Christian Vocation, p. 15.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed. op. cit., pp. 88, 89.

teachers or administrators, etc. according to the gift received. This usage might correspond to the second dictionary definition of vocation and Calhoun's second meaning, 'to choose, to select and assign to an office, a task or a special status'. The vocation of man in all three senses, according to Biblical writers, profoundly affects all of an individual's life including his daily labour although the Bible only once speaks of vocation in any sense as a 'calling' to a certain profession or type of daily work or career. Paul uses calling in this sense in one passage only.¹ It is well, because the time until the end of the present age is short, that one should remain in the "outward state or station of life in which one has heard the divine summons and answered it."² Calhoun feels that this outward state of life includes one's daily work, his marital status, whether he was circumcised or uncircumcised, and so even here, calling refers to more than a career or type of occupation. Since a man's station in life is itself allotted by God, it can be regarded in that sense as a divine calling or assignment to a special task.

The term election is used in the New Testament sometimes in contrast to calling as in Mt. 22:14 "'For many are called, but few are chosen'".³ "Election" and "choosing" are often used in the New Testament to convey the

¹ 1 Cor. 7:17-24.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 89.

³ All Biblical quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

meaning of selection, assignment to a special task or office. Calhoun states however, that "most often, especially in Pauline thought, calling and election are substantially or wholly identical, so that to be called is to be both chosen and summoned."¹ H.H. Rowley² uses the term election to refer to God's choosing of Israel as his people and to their threefold assignment or special mission including the bringing of his work to all nations.

It was the conviction of the Biblical writers that human life including daily work gets its meaning and significance in and through God's calling and election by his word. Before we can understand therefore, the Biblical attitude toward daily labour it is necessary to examine the conception of what God's calling involved both in the Old and New Testaments.

B. Vocation.

The Old Testament writers felt that Israel as a community had been called or elected by God for a special purpose. They were His chosen people through whom and to whom He revealed Himself. The exact date of Israel's election or calling is disputed. Some say it began with the Patriarchs and others with Moses. H.H. Rowley in his book The Biblical Doctrine of Election claims that there is truth in both positions. God was already shaping through Abraham and the Patriarchs a people to serve him.

¹ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 88.

² H.H. Rowley, Biblical Doctrine of Election.

While the Patriarchs probably did not worship God by the actual name of Yahweh it seems fairly certain that he delivered Israel from Egypt because of his promise to Abraham, as Deuteronomy suggests. "Abraham was the first man with a definite, explicit sense of vocation", says W.R. Forrester.¹ Ever after him faith was a response to a call from God resulting in responsibility for both parties. This is the germ of the covenant idea and the secret of the Jews' greatness as a nation and pertinacity as a people and race. It is their sense of vocation or calling that has held and is holding the Jews together as a people in spite of dispersion and persecution.

Moses carried out a new and more significant stage in the election of Israel. He felt that Yahweh had called him to act as his instrument in delivering the Israelite people from bondage. With the help of God Moses brought a new name for God to the Israelites and succeeded in delivering them from slavery. Israel responded to this act of divine grace in gratitude and entered into a voluntary covenant relationship with God. Yahweh had delivered them, their response must be unconditional loyalty and faithfulness, summarized by Moses in the decalogue: "and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might."² There are three important aspects of this calling or vocation of Israel. First, Israel was elected or chosen by God not

¹ W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 23.

² Deut. 6:5.

because of her own merit or goodness. She, a down-trodden, slave people was selected by an act of free divine grace. She in no way deserved it.

For you are a people holy to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his own possession, out of all the people that are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all people; but it is because the Lord loves you.¹

Second, the people of Israel were elected for service not for favour. They were chosen by God in his grace to be instruments in the fulfilling of his holy purpose. Indeed Amos was convinced that Yahweh's special calling to Israel made them uniquely accountable to him:

You only have I known
of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will punish you
for all your iniquities.²

Too often the Jews were willing to accept the privilege election involved and not the responsibility, but in doing so they automatically rejected the covenant and their election. Israel must renew the covenant generation by generation, Rowley points out, by accepting anew its obligation of service. If she refused to serve she rejected the covenant and was no longer God's people or his instrument and he would raise up a new instrument for accomplishing his purpose. God, however, as Jeremiah, Hosea, and other prophets saw was anxious to keep the covenant and even to renew it when Israel broke it.

¹ Deut. 7:6-8a.

² Amos 3:2.

Suffering and punishment were last desperate measures of disappointed love to bring the people back to His ways.

The service or task to which Israel was called by God was threefold.¹ The people must hear the Word of Yahweh and receive it, they must reflect it in their daily living, and they must spread his Word throughout the world to all nations. Yahweh was the supreme universal God, ruling over all nations and he had called Israel to be the instrument of his revelation. Israel then, must not only receive the truth about God but she must reflect and bear it to others. To fail in fulfilling any of these three aspects of service was to reject her vocation or election. The Old Testament is, in a sense, the story of Israel's continual failure to fulfill her threefold obligation to God, in contrast to God's faithfulness to the covenant and his efforts to bring Israel to repentance through disaster and suffering. Most of the prophets reminded Israel that her calling involved responsibility as well as privilege. Any glory they might receive would be because God had chosen them, not because of their own merits. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and others each emphasized some aspect of God's truth such as righteousness and mercy, that the people must reflect in their lives. An example is Micah's famous summary of the truths stressed by Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah.

¹ This is the position H.H. Rowley takes in his book The Biblical Doctrine of Election. Much of this section has been derived from his work.

With what shall I come before the Lord,
and bow myself before God on high?

...
He has showed you, O man, what is good;
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice, and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?¹

This stress on the reflection of God's truth in daily life had profound significance for the attitude of the Biblical writers to daily work as we shall see.

Israel failed to keep the covenant, to perform her threefold service to God and hence the pre-exilic prophets felt she would be destroyed as a useless instrument just as a potter destroys and reworks a spoiled vessel,² or at least God would punish her in the hope of restoration. At this time there developed a concept of a righteous remnant that would be saved to serve God. Some prophets including Amos felt that a small group who had served the Lord in the threefold service would be saved while others including Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel felt such a group would be preserved, not for their righteousness, but simply by divine grace.

Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and he shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.³

This remnant would respond by repenting and turning to God in service some felt. Others said this remnant would be saved by God's grace to transfer their mission, as in the

¹ Mic. 6:6a,8.

² Jer. 18:1 ff.

³ Jer. 23:5.

case of Jacob, to others whom God could use for his purpose. Just how the remnant would carry out its mission the prophets were not agreed upon. There are several views expressed in the Bible. Micah and Ezekiel visualized the remnant as serving God by acting as a conquering people, subduing other nations and showing them the power of Yahweh. Deutero-Isaiah conceived of the remnant saving others through its suffering. Here we have the high point in the Old Testament's concept of calling, election or vocation. Suffering was not simply something that God's chosen should endure in the course of their mission it was to be the very vehicle or means whereby they should accomplish their mission, the bringing of God's Word to other nations. Biblical scholars are divided on whether Deutero-Isaiah is speaking of an individual as the remnant and suffering servant or of a small select group of Israelites. Though there are varying concepts in the Old Testament of the remnant all the Biblical authors agree that the remnant would remain God's chosen only as long as it fulfilled the corollaries of election in service for God.¹

Following the exile and the decline of prophecy the Jews emphasized more and more the privilege involved in God's calling, and while the importance of receiving, preserving and reflecting the divine law was stressed, less emphasis was placed upon the third great aspect of

¹ H.H. Rowley, op. cit.

Israel's covenant, the spreading of God's Word to those outside of Israel. During Nehemiah's time and later Ezra, Jewish nationalism became increasingly narrower, ritual and racial purity were stressed, and the third corollary of election was neglected. This tendency was opposed by the prophetic movement which recognized the part to be played by Hebrews as missionaries to other peoples. Thus the books of Ruth and Jonah were written as a protest to the narrow nationalism, a repulsive brutal picture of which appears in Neh. 13:23-27. In contrast Jonah, more than any other book in the Old Testament, brings out the importance of the missionary purpose to take the Word of God to those who need it, to be 'a light to lighten the gentiles'.

The Jews did not really fulfill the third responsibility of their calling, they did not extend their election to many men outside of Israel. While it is true that small groups of Jews at various times attempted to mediate the Word of God to gentiles such an effort was not characteristic of Israel as a whole. Proselytes, as such converts were called, were usually gentiles who were impressed by the faith of the Jews of the dispersion and such proselytes as Ruth were a rarity. There was never any systematic attempt by Israel, says Rowley, to spread God's Word to other nations and Israel steadily turned her back on this third great corollary of election while she increasingly put emphasis on the idea of privilege by Jewish birth. Ultimately she repudiated her election by refusing to

fulfill this obligation of service. Nevertheless, even during the period of Israel's most narrow nationalism there remained a vivid sense of vocation or calling though the emphasis was on privilege, and the true meaning of vocation distorted. This sense of calling continued to guide and direct the daily life and work of the Jewish people. Thus, elaborate ritual laws governing every area of life were developed by the scribes that the Jews might preserve their racial purity and therefore their vocation or election. The Jews still felt called to receive the divine Word in the post-exilic period even if that Word was falsely identified with the ritualistic laws of the scribes.

The Old Testament refers to the calling of individuals and their assignment to special tasks. "The Bible is replete with stories of those whom God summoned for particular errands: Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, the prophets, priests and kings, the Messiah and his apostles."¹ These callings provide the closest analogy to the modern use of the term vocation.² In the election of judges, kings, priests and prophets the same pattern holds true as did with the nation, says Rowley. Individuals retained their election only so long as they served God by receiving and reflecting God's Word and mediating it to others. As Minear points out the work of the individual called "had

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 51.

² This is the second usage of calling as outlined in the Introduction, chapter I.

no significance in itself apart from the fulfilment of God's covenant with the entire people."¹ His mission or vocation was a part of the larger vocation of the nation. Thus Saul fell from election because he placed his own will above his vocation or calling, the will of God.

Another interesting feature of this selection of men for special roles, as both Rowley and Minear point out, is that these men felt constrained often against their will to serve God. "Its character as calling was protected by the fact that a person did not seek it but, in fact, resisted it."² Such men as Jeremiah felt against their will the urge to serve God in a special task as part of their election:

If I say, "I will not mention him,
or speak any more in his name,"
there is in my heart as it were a
burning fire
shut up in my bones,
and I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot.³

They resisted the call because it so drastically affected their everyday living. Jeremiah's errand would make him a social outcast, flogged and beaten by men, derided as a fool, his life in daily peril. If Deutero-Isaiah in his "Songs of the Suffering Servant" is speaking of an individual and not a personification of Israel, or if he starts out with the latter in mind and finished with the former as Rowley holds, then it is here that the climax of the

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 51.

² Ibid., p. 52.

³ Jer. 20:9.

Old Testament's view on the election of individuals is reached. The "Songs of the Suffering Servant", as we have seen, show clearly that election was not for privilege but for service, in this case vicarious suffering. Without doubt the calling of individuals to special tasks like the shared vocation of the nation deeply affected the daily work of the individual.

The prophets also believed in divine election of both nations and individuals outside the covenant relationship. Isaiah speaks of Assyria as an instrument of God to punish Israel and Jeremiah and Habbakuk speak of the Seythians and Chaldeans in a similar way. Likewise men like Nebuchadnezzar and the Egyptian Pharaoh of the exodus were referred to as men chosen and used by God for special purposes. Cyrus was called a servant of God because he was an instrument of God's gracious purpose in deliverance and restoration of Israel. Both these men and nations though called by God would receive no reward or privilege for their election but rather punishment for they served either unwillingly or unwittingly. Thus, all election within or without the covenant is for service, though not all election is for honour or salvation. No service outside the covenant leads to a permanent relationship between the elect and God.

Israel then, had a concept of divine vocation, calling or election. This was a calling for threefold service; receiving God's Word, reflecting this revelation in her life, and the spreading of this Word to other peoples.

To reject this service was to reject the vocation, even for Jews. Election was not dependent upon being a physical descendant from Abraham but rather on one's response to God's grace and willingness to accept the responsibilities of the covenant. The vocation of Israel affected every aspect of her life from foreign policy to social reform and the practises of merchants. The Biblical writers believed that some men, including prophets, priests, and kings, received special callings for unique tasks. These callings were always related to, and contributed to Israel's larger vocation. Thus the prophets felt called to give the nation guidance and remind her of her calling by relating what God had done in the past, what he was even now accomplishing in the tangled events of the day, and providing a vision of what God was about to do in fulfilling his covenants. "The selection of men for special roles did not diminish the prestige of humbler forms of service", writes Minear.¹ Each individual in his life's work and worship should help Israel to fulfill her calling.

Rowley has shown us that election or vocation in the Old Testament did not automatically include all Jews. The true remnant according to Old Testament writers would include only Israelites who had responded to God's calling in faith and service. Proselytes by accepting these terms of the covenant could share in the divine election. Though the prophets, in their own peculiar ways, all fulfilled

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 51.

their special mission, Israel still continued to ignore the third great corollary of election in spite of continual reminders and warnings from such prophets as the writer of Jonah:

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, "Arise, go to Ninevah, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you."¹

The climactic event in this long epic of Israel's failure, punishment, repentance, restoration and failure again, the process repeating itself, was the sending of the Messiah. He was faithful to His special task: "disclosure of the love and power of God, in service to needy men",² and He also perfectly fulfilled the calling of Israel in the role of Deutero-Isaiah's suffering servant. As living Lord, Jesus Christ revealed the meaning and purpose of all the earlier covenants, the activity of God working for good in present affairs, and the plan and purpose of God for mankind in the future consummation of history when God's Kingdom would be established on earth. As the Word of God incarnate He perfectly fulfilled then, the first aspect of Israel's vocation, the receiving and reflecting of God's Word. Through the cross Jesus, as the suffering servant, made God's Word and grace available to all mankind. Millions all over the world have since turned to God because of Christ's suffering.

As agent of the Kingdom's powers, the Servant (was)

¹ Jon. 3:1,2.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit.
p. 87.

sent to heal the sick, to cast out demons, to cleanse lepers, and to raise the dead. He (was) sent to bear the burden of the world's sin and alienation, and to incarnate by humble identification with the lost the healing power of God's love.¹

Thus He perfectly fulfilled the third aspect of service involved in Israel's calling. Moses had complete confidence that God had chosen him and the Hebrews as his people, their deliverance from bondage is objective evidence that this confidence was not misguided. Similarly Jesus had complete confidence that God had chosen him to fulfill the election mission. He was certain therefore that His suffering would have a tremendous effect. History has shown that His confidence was not misplaced. Just as Moses added something new to Kenite Yahwehism to usher in a new stage in Israel's election so Christ through his teachings and cross formed a new covenant between God and his chosen people. The sovereign calling was disclosed with new power and wisdom in Christ, "at once a promise and an imperative demand for devotion to God and love to fellow men. Hence the church itself was appropriately called *ekklēsia*, an assembly of those convoked into a new community."²

Christ revealed a new meaning of vocation by providing us with radically new conceptions of the nature of life itself, and defining by his life and death life's all-inclusive purpose. "Jesus Christ is the Living Lord, who reveals life, shares it, gives it, invites and em-

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, op. cit., p. 61.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, op. cit., p. 89.

powers men to enter into it. He is Life."¹ "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."² In Christ men learn that they have been really dead, slaves to sin and death though they supposed themselves to be alive. Like the prodigal son in Jesus' parable who felt he was really 'living' when he was far from home 'squandering his property in loose living'. "But when he came to himself" he realized how mistaken he was, repented and turned homewards. His father rejoiced to see him;

But while he was yet at a distance, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. ... 'Let us eat and make merry; for this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found.'³

So men find true life in Christ, they die to their old selves of sin and death and rise to new life in Christ (Rom. 6:1-11) "We were buried therefore with (Christ) by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life."⁴ Hence true life begins with death to the old self and old life and a new birth brought about by accepting the grace of Jesus Christ. This grace brings a man into right relationship with God and empowers him to live no longer to himself but to God. "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."⁵ 'The love of

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 60.

² Phil. 1:21.

³ Lk. 15:11-32.

⁴ Rom. 6:4.

⁵ 2 Cor. 5:17.

Christ controls him'. The transition from the old to the new life, and the new life itself, is described in many different ways throughout the New Testament.¹ The new life is deliverance from death, with the assurance of glory to come; and 'it is deliverance from the bondage of sin, with freedom to do the right'.² All descriptions of this new life, as Minear points out, "underscore the radical and final character of the change from a living death to a dying life."³

This life under the new covenant includes the three-fold service of the old covenant, the receiving, reflecting and spreading of the Word of God. It is best defined by the mission of Christ himself which included the proclaiming of the good news of God's Kingdom, the healing of the sick, casting out of demons and cleansing of lepers. Jesus' mission also meant acting as an agent of peace and reconciliation. Just how this mission of Christ affected his carpenter's work and how it affects the daily labour of his disciples will be examined in a later section. "The perfect pattern of vocation becomes clear in the person of Jesus Christ, in whom both the divine calling and the human response meet."⁴ Christ was the new Adam, the representative man of the new Israel, through whom

¹ Rom. 6:1 - 8:13. Discusses the ethical character of salvation or the new life.

² C.H. Dodd, in Moffatt New Testament Commentary, p. 71.

³ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., pp. 60, 61.

⁴ Ibid., p. 71.

individuals are born anew, freed from sin and at one with God. They share a difficult mission, defined in Christ and similar to the old Israel's threefold task, but now men are enabled to answer that call in grateful love with the gift of the Holy Spirit and sufficient power to do their part in achieving the divine vocation. "In (Christ) mankind is being restored to its authentic vocation."¹

The church as the Body of Christ has inherited Israel's vocation. Paul states that the true Israel does not consist of all Jews nor does it consist of only Jews but rather all who are circumcised inwardly, who have responded to God's grace as revealed in Christ. In so far as the church responds then to God's call and fulfills the obligations of service she is heir of Israel's divine election or vocation. The grace of God manifested in his deliverance of Israel called forth a response of faith and obedience that resulted in the old covenant; so the grace of God as seen in Jesus Christ called forth a response of faith and obedience resulting in the new covenant. For evidence of her heritage the church points to Jesus Christ her head and founder and her own history. Jesus Christ as we have seen perfectly fulfilled the vocation of Israel, he redeemed vocation. His will and work were integrated with God's will and work. But Jesus Christ is a Living Lord still aggressively completing his avowed intention,

¹ Loc. cit.

bringing about the Kingdom of God. He carries on His work through His Body the church. The church is the sole heir for the Jews have not made the covenant of their fathers their own, they have not carried out the three-fold service the way the church has, they have not responded completely to God's calling. The church then, says Rowley, is not just a body meeting for mutual worship and edification but it is the Israel of God, chosen and called by him, responding in a covenant that is both individual and corporate. She has been chosen to receive grace but also to render service. The church in fulfilling her vocation must follow the pattern set for her by her Master Jesus Christ. She must receive the Word and revelation of God in Jesus Christ, reflect this will in her life and mediate God's grace and salvation to all men. Christ working through the Holy Spirit enables the church to accomplish the last two aspects of service to an extent not possible in the old Israel. For when she takes the yoke of service upon her the church finds that it is made light through a strength not her own: "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."¹ The church must preach the good news, act as reconciler, carry out the role of the suffering servant and imitate other aspects of Jesus' ministry referred to above.

Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his

¹ Mt. 11:30.

cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."¹

"God calls His people, His church, the sign and messenger of His coming Kingdom to priesthood, to prophetic teaching and to kingship, in other words to share with Christ in his threefold ministry of prophet, priest and king."² The church, with her vocation to act as signs and instruments of salvation to the whole world, looks forward with hope and confidence to the future event of the open manifestation of Christ as the Lord of Lords. Hence, everything the individual Christian and the church do has an eternal significance beyond its immediate appearance. The shared vocation of the church as Christ's Body is well summed up in the United Church Statement of Faith:

We believe that the Church is the organ of Christ's mind and redemptive will, the body of which He is the Head. Under Him the Church is called to the proclamation of the everlasting Gospel with its offer of salvation, to the worship of God, Creator and Redeemer, to the loving service of mankind, and to the care and nurture of the flock.²

Besides God's call to mankind to repent and return to him in faith, and his summons of those who respond to give service, the New Testament also speaks of God's calling to the individual Christian within the church fellowship. Every individual member is called upon to do his part under the authority of Christ the Head, to help the church fulfill her obligations to the covenant.

¹ World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 19.

² United Church of Canada, op. cit., Article VII, p. 4.

Now there are varieties of gifts but the same spirit;
and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;
and there are varieties of working, but it is the
same God who inspires them all in every one."¹

The individual members are called by God through Christ to repentance and faith but "they are not just called for their own sakes they are called into the people of God, the Church, and the Church as a whole, its individual members, are called to be signs and instruments of salvation."² Each member receives the gift of the Holy Spirit; "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."³ Every individual then, is called to perform a special function within the fellowship, to contribute toward the shared vocation of the church. This special task depends upon the gift of the Spirit, whether it be "gifts of healing", the "utterance of wisdom", "prophecy" or "the ability to distinguish between spirits."⁴ Each of these special tasks has its place in the functioning of the body of the church just like the organs of the human body;

But as it is, God arranged the organs in the body each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single organ, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts; yet one body.⁵

Above all each member must perform his special function or task in the spirit of love.⁶ This call to a special task

¹ 1 Cor. 12:4-6.

² World Council of Churches, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 18.

³ 1 Cor. 12:7.

⁴ 1 Cor. 12:4-31.

⁵ 1 Cor. 12:18-20.

⁶ 1 Cor. 13.

through the gift of the Spirit did not necessarily involve any change in secular work, as we shall see. Thus the vocation or calling of the church and the Christian individual through his special function as part of the church body is to co-operate with God in his work, to work for the Kingdom of God, to be 'ambassadors for Christ' performing 'the ministry of reconciliation'; "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us."¹ The field of daily labour is one area in life where Christians may let 'God appeal through them', where they may carry on the 'work' of Christ as his Body.

C. Relation of Work and Vocation in Scripture.

As has already been stated the Bible usually uses the term work in referring to God's work or Christ's work, the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, and the proper work of Christians, the task of reconciling the world through Christ to God. To do this work of God is the shared vocation or calling of Christians. But the Bible also has a very important message regarding work in the sense of daily labour and its relation to the Christian's vocation or the 'work' of the Kingdom.

Both the Old and New Testaments regard daily labour a natural and necessary function of man. It is part of the normal and inevitable lot of mankind; it is God-appointed. The Genesis myths, both the J and P accounts,

¹ 2 Cor. 5:20.

reflect the Hebrew belief that work is not a punishment for man's wrong doing but is part of the natural order of creation established by God, before the fall of man; and 'God saw that it was good'. Thus, the J account says; "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it",¹ while the P account reads; "And God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it.'"² Work is part of the Creator's intention for man in the world. To be denied work is to be treated as less than human. The very make-up of the world is such that man must work to fill his natural and spiritual needs and to fulfill his function as a human being.³ Throughout the Bible this concept of daily labour prevails⁴ and no stigma is attached to the 'worker' as was common in Greek thought.

To the Greeks "the ideal man was a gentleman who lived a life of ease, exempt from toil, care, hardship and illness; the inferior kind of man was subject to all these things."⁵ Thus Hesiod⁶ deals with the myth of the Golden Age when men lived like gods and didn't have to labour. But degeneration has set in in the universe, the earth is becoming progressively more unfruitful and man has to work harder for a livelihood. Lucretius conceived

¹ Gen. 2: 15.

² Gen. 1: 28a.

³ Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 24.

⁴ W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 122.

⁵ Loc. cit.

⁶ See Hesiod, Works and Days.

of work in a similar fashion, and felt that work was a symbol of doom for the creative man. Plato in his idea of the ideal republic disqualified both the artist and the artisan from the highest kind of life, which is pure contemplation, because of their toil and manual labour. Aristotle distinguished between "energia" which was the activity involved in contemplation, the kind of activity that even the gods participated in, and "pomos" referring to hard manual labour, toil which is drudgery.¹ While we cannot claim that all Greeks regarded work as degrading, for the great achievements of Greek architecture were, as Zimmern points out,² accomplished by free labour, still it seems that "they honoured only such toil as contributed to some result that was artistically satisfying." On the whole the typical Greek view seems to have been that "work was an indignity, a disability, cutting a man off from God and degrading him among his fellows, below the level of true humanity and full citizenship."³

This is in sharp contrast to the Hebrew and Biblical concept of the divine ordinance of work. Only in the Apocrypha literature is there any similarity to the Greek aristocratic conception of labour. Thus, in Ecclesiasticus, which is strongly tempered by Hellenistic thought, work is regarded as a hindrance to exercising spiritual function or participating in government. The potter and

¹ W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 126.

² Ibid., p. 124.

³ Loc. cit.

all those that "trust to their hands ... shall not be sought for in publick counsel, nor sit high in congregation."¹ The Bible attaches no such stigma to the 'worker' but on the contrary expects that every man will have his proper work to do. God himself, is viewed as a worker; "So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."² The movement of thought in the Bible is away from J account's primitive concept of God as a worker who created the world with his hands to the less anthropomorphic conception of God where he creates the world through an agent. Wisdom is the agent suggested in the Wisdom literature. The P code conceives of God accomplishing creation through commands: "And God said 'let there be light'; and there was light."³ Richardson in his book The Biblical Doctrine of Work points out that this movement is not because the Biblical writers came to regard working with hands as degrading but simply was an effort to get away from anthropomorphic crudities that might cause Yahweh to be compared and classed with other gods. God is a worker and men are invited to survey his wondrous works:

Hear this, O Job;
stop and consider the wondrous
works of God.

...

¹ Ecclesiasticus 38:31a, 33a. Authorized Version Apocrypha.

² Gen. 2:3.

³ Gen. 1:3.

Can you, like him, spread out the skies,
hard as a molten mirror?¹

Work is not dishonorable for God works. Likewise the Hebrews saw nothing degrading about kings working with their hands and the Bible speaks of Saul ploughing and David tending sheep. The prophets and sages of the Old Testament were not frowned upon because they worked. In fact while the Greeks tended to think that to be a philosopher one must be a spectator of life, detached from it, objective, the Hebrews felt that to be wise a man must be participating in the issues of life, living actively with the people. The fact that Amos was a shepherd and picked worms out of the fruit of the sycamore did not detract from his message any more than Micah's occupation as a farmer barred him from preaching wisdom. The kings, prophets and priests of Israel came from all walks of life and the Old Testament writers saw no reason to hide this fact. Richardson points out that the Hebrew word for servant means worker and that far from being a dishonorable term Deutero-Isaiah uses it for his lofty conception of Israel's vocation, the suffering servant. Work then, is considered in the Old Testament as part of the nature of the world God created: "Man goes forth to his work and to his labour until the evening."² The prophets therefore, scathingly attack the idle rich:

Woe to those who lie upon beds of ivory,
and stretch themselves upon their couches,

¹ Job. 37:14,18.

² Ps. 104:23.

and eat lambs from the flock,
and calves from the midst of the stall;

Therefore they shall now be the
first of those to go into exile,
and the revelry of those who
stretch themselves shall pass away.¹

Proverbs contains many exhortations to industry: "Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise."²

The New Testament's attitude to daily work is similar. Though the Gospels are not concerned with Jesus' work as a carpenter and attach little significance to this fact nevertheless the fact he was a carpenter supports the Old Testament view of work. God incarnate as a workman is in keeping with the Biblical view of God as the master workman. The fact that Jesus Christ was a humble carpenter is the "final refutation of the view that work is degrading and beneath the dignity of a 'gentleman'. Even a slave could say, "God became what we are, in order that we might become what he is."³ Paul too was a craftsman and continued in his trade of tent making even while involved in his missions: "We did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labour we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you."⁴ Paul assumes that daily work is not a hindrance to the Christian life but is part of it and therefore he condemns idleness:

For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ

¹ Amos 6:4,7.

² Prov. 6:6.

³ Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴ 2 Thess. 3:8.

to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living.¹

He quickly corrects the mistaken idea held by some of the Christians in Thessalonica that because of the nearness of Christ's second coming there was no need to work. They seemed to be looking forward to a workless utopia. Paul's command: "If any one will not work, let him not eat",² is in harmony with the Biblical view that daily labour is part of the divinely ordered structure of the universe and quite necessary.

Work is not evil in itself and was intended by God to be a blessing but man's sin against God, his rebellion, has distorted work just as it has distorted every other area of life. Instead of work being the glad co-operation under God for the common good it has become the scene of bitterness, rivalry and strife. This truth is expressed in the Genesis myths. After Adam and Eve's disobedience and rebellion God put work under a curse:

... cursed is the ground because of you;
in toil you shall eat of it all the
days of your life;
thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you;

...
In the sweat of you face
you shall eat bread
till you return to the ground.³

The resulting condition of work after man's rebellion is well illustrated by the strife between Cain and Abel. Work is not originally a punishment for sin but work in

¹ 2 Thess. 3:11,12.

² 2 Thess. 3:10b.

³ Gen. 3:17b, 18a, 19a.

its toilsome, harsh aspects is a result of man's broken relationship with God. Work instead of appearing as a blessing to man is now viewed in his distorted vision with the bitterness and despair expressed in Ecclesiastes: "What has a man from all the toil and strain with which he toils beneath the sun: For all his days are full of pain, and his work is a vexation; even in the night his mind does not rest."¹ As the writer of Ecclesiastes goes on to point out man's labour is fruitful and meaningful only when man and God meet in harmony with like purpose in daily work. To find enjoyment in work is true blessedness but "This also, I saw, is from the hand of God; for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?"² From a Biblical view point then, it is wrong to seek a workless utopia for work is a part of the world as God created it, and though man through his sin has made it a scene of futility and strife, yet his rebellion does not cancel the law. God's ordinance will hold till the end of history and man is still subject to it. An honest days' work is every man's duty. "Six days you shall labor, and do all your work."³

The key to the Biblical understanding of work is in the relationship in which it places work to vocation. That is, the Bible believes that the significance of daily

¹ Eccles. 2:22,23.

² Eccles. 2:24b, 25.

³ Ex. 20:9.

labour is derived solely from its relationship to God and his calling. "The decisive axis in the Biblical attitude toward work is the link between man's labour and the whole work of God, the Creator and redeemer."¹ Man's daily labour is an area of life where he may hear and respond to God's call through Christ to salvation. It is where he may, in his new freedom as a Christian, help the church in the spirit of love fulfill her calling or shared vocation. It is where he may also perform his special function or task, his individual calling as a member of the Body of Christ. Daily labour is an area of life where man may meet God, hear his call and co-operate with his will and find purpose and satisfaction, or rebel against God and strive on his own and find futility and despair. God is at work throughout the world and he works through and with man. His work touches man's at many different points: "Thou dost cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth."² Daily labour is one of the areas of life where man may serve God and do his share in fulfilling the divine calling. This relationship of work to divine vocation is explicitly stated in the New Testament but it is implicit also in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament all occupations derive their significance from their relationship to Israel's calling, as places

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 46.

² Ps. 104:14.

where man could work with God and do his share in helping Israel keep the corollaries of her covenant. Hence, there is no hierarchy of occupations in the Old Testament in which jobs requiring manual labour are at the bottom, and the more cultured jobs of selling and ruling are at the top, for even the humblest and lowliest forms of manual labour could become a means to helping Israel realize her corporate vocation. Since king, prophet, soldier, goat-herder and farmer all shared the same vocation no ultimate distinction could be drawn between their occupations. This close relationship of work to Israel's vocation is one reason why Amos and other prophets¹ so bitterly attacked false weighing of goods, squeezing money from the poor, for they were hindering instead of helping Israel reflect the Word of God, fulfill her vocation, and keep her covenant.

In the New Testament there is the same lack of importance attached to the type of secular work one does as there is in the Old Testament. The type of occupation was secondary in importance to the motive of the worker himself. The personal as well as the shared calling of the worker would perhaps involve a change in secular work as it did with Matthew, the tax collector, or the fishermen Simon, Andrew, James and John: "and immediately they left their nets and followed him."² On the other hand

¹ See Amos 5, Mic. 3.

² Mk. 1:18.

it might not involve any change in secular work at all. Onesimus was sent back to his master by Paul to continue his work as a slave.¹ Thus there is no hierarchy of proper secular jobs for Christians found in the New Testament. As in the Old Testament there is the belief that even the humblest tasks, such as washing feet and working as a slave, as well as such occupations as slave owners and those involving authority over others, are places where one may serve Christ and do his part in helping to fulfill the shared vocation of the church.

Slaves, be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. ... Masters, do the same to them, and forbear threatening, knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with him.²

The slave-owner is not superior to the slave, their duties are different but both are responsible to God and may serve him equally well. Romans 13 and Ephesians 6:5-9 are often quoted to defend the status quo or to defend "pretty doubtful race and class relationships"³ but on the whole the church since Christ has been unable to escape the principle that dependence does not imply inferiority nor indignity. In the sight of God and in the fellowship of the church such distinctions become irrelevant "for by one Spirit we were all baptized into one

¹ See Letter to Philemon.

² Eph. 6:5,6,9.

³ W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 139.

body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and all were made to drink of one Spirit."¹

There is no explicit doctrine of the relationship between work and vocation in the recorded Gospels but as we have seen the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, a carpenter, forever banished the inevitability of daily work being a meaningless task. The New Testament implies that Christ as fulfiller of the law of God also fulfilled the ordinance of work. Jesus Christ "though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."² Jesus perfectly demonstrated the right relationship between daily work and his 'work', mission, or vocation. The Gospels do not develop this but we see in such stories as Jesus plucking corn, washing his disciples feet, breaking bread, that the Master used daily chores to serve God's purpose and his mission. Christ redeemed work not just by example but through his redemption of life itself. In restoring man to right relationship with God through faith Christ redeems lives and "this includes the lives of men as workers, so that they are preserved from the wretchedness and destructiveness of so much of the work that is done by human hands."³ Work so redeemed becomes a thing of joy. A

¹ 1 Cor. 12:13.

² Phil. 2:6,7.

³ Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 29.

Christian no longer does his work with a sense of despair or for external rewards or to satisfy personal ambition or to provide security. He is free from these motives and desires. As Richardson points out drudgery, hardships, limitations of skill and character remain but they have lost their power over the worker for he is not doing his work for men but for Christ alone.

Paul's own life demonstrated how daily labour can be directly related to the individual call and his function within the church as well as the shared vocation. Minear briefly summarizes¹ the reasons why Paul chose to continue his weaving. This summary shows clearly the link Paul saw between his occupation and vocation. Paul continued his weaving, in the first place, because he felt that payment for his preaching, which would be necessary otherwise, would tend to corrupt the true motive for presenting the gospel and would place "an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ."² Secondly, Paul continued in his secular occupation because he felt there was an opportunity to bring the gospel to fellow workers. "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some."³ The third reason Paul gives is his desire not to become a burden to the church. His occupation then helped him fulfill his vocation by giving him

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 73.

² 1 Cor. 9:12-18.

³ 1 Cor. 9:22.

an opportunity 'to spend himself' for their sakes. "I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls."¹ His work enabled him to show the people that he desired them and not their goods, "it was evidence of his desire to be a blameless witness, to command the respect of outsiders and to furnish an example for other Christians to emulate."² In his letter to the Thessalonians Paul writes; "For you remember our labor and toil, brethren; we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you, while we preached to you the gospel of God."³ Paul then, felt that his daily work contributed to the fulfillment of his vocation as an apostle and hence to the fulfillment of the church's shared vocation. "His vocation was not identified with his occupation, but neither were the two completely separate."⁴

The Bible as a whole, as Minear points out,⁵ 'emphasizes the agent more than the act, the motive of the laborer more than the mode of his labor'. Unless God is present in the hearts of the workers the work is in vain: "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain."⁶ Thus, Jesus speaking of the coming Kingdom said that on the day when the Son of Man is revealed, "there will be two women grinding together; one will be

¹ 2 Cor. 12:15a.

² Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 73.

³ 1 Thess. 2:9 - see also 1 Thess. 2:10-12 and 4:12, 2 Thess. 3:8-13.

⁴ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 74.

⁵ Ibid., p. 40 ff.

⁶ Ps. 127:1 - see also Ps. 90:17.

taken and the other left."¹ Of two men in bed one will be taken and the other left. What these people were occupied in was not ultimately so important as the state of their heart and their motive. The Christian worker must not strive by his service for God, that he performs in his daily occupation, to win his salvation. This is the wrong motive and purpose. Such 'good works' never effect salvation. Rather, as Richardson says, "all our service as workers must be inspired by gratitude on our part for the free mercy and gift of God, it is not the earning of a reward but the utterly inadequate acknowledgment of a debt."² This idea is expressed in Jesus' parable about the servant who when he had done all came in from the field and expected no thanks, "so you also, when you have done all that is commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.'"³ The new motive of the worker, then, is gratitude and love instead of fear or any selfish ambitions whether eternal life, material gain, security, power or glory. This attitude is the inevitable result of an individual's new relationship with God, made possible by God's grace in Christ, and accepted on faith by the believer. Service springs freely from love, from a real desire to do God's will, not reluctantly from fear or a sense of duty. This inner change and new motive of the Christian worker re-

¹ Lk. 17:36.

² Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 61.

³ Lk. 17:10.

deems his work for it enables him to integrate his daily labour to his own special mission or calling as well as to the shared vocation of the church.

To the extent that his work springs from a will that is obedient, that work is redeemed. It is transferred from a realm of sin to a realm of grace, from the kingdom of frustration to the kingdom of joy. It becomes the right earthly means for fulfilling a heavenly calling.¹

This emphasis on the importance of the workers' motive and vocation appears to deflate the importance of the individuals' occupation, but, as Minear points out, in reality it gives every occupation, every job a genuine but derivative significance. Every job is important not because of its social utility but because God may or may not be present, and it is "potentially the place where the worker must give an account of himself to his Maker."² A man's daily labour is important because there he may hear and respond to God's call to life, there he may at least in part do his share in carrying out the vocation of the church, hearing the Word of God, reflecting it in his life, bringing it to other people. This claim that man's new relationship with God resulting in a sense of mission, which can be accomplished at least partially through daily labour, is the great principle governing the relation of sacred to secular.

This new relationship between work and vocation,

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 71.

² Ibid., p. 43.

that is made possible by God redeeming the heart of the worker through Christ, produces, says the New Testament, certain standard practices and attitudes in daily work among all Christian workers regardless of their occupation. The 'love of Christ' is the controlling factor, "therefore, if any one is in Christ; he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."¹ The new attitudes to work and the duties involved are on such a high standard that they could easily lead one to withdraw from the world and its corruptions. But Paul continually reminded the early Christians that while they were "colonists of heaven" and citizens of the eternal city of God they were also citizens of the "no mean" city of this earthly life and had obligations in it. They were not to break off associations with "the greedy and the robbers, or idolaters."² As Christians they were to strive for purity but they need not fear that contact with the world would stain them. Such things as food involved in pagan rites are not unclean in themselves, for "nothing is unclean in itself", it is the attitude of the Christian participant that determines their cleanliness "for whatever does not proceed from faith is sin."³

Richardson⁴ feels that what the New Testament has to say regarding the attitudes and duties of Christian

¹ 2 Cor. 5:17.

² 1 Cor. 5:9-13.

³ Rom. 14:23b - see whole 14th chapter.

⁴ Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 40 ff.

workers is found largely in the so-called house-tables incorporated in the epistles.¹ These tables were probably originally from a crude Christian catechism based upon a stoic model but even though they deal primarily with the problems of Christian slaves they contain Christian ethics regarding work that are applicable to almost any period or situation. These house-tables do not provide a rigid set of rules or codes but set down the new spirit and the actions that should spring from a grateful heart.

Richardson summarizes the New Testament teachings regarding the duties of workers into three main ones. First, Christian workers or slaves are urged to be dutiful and obedient, and to render respect to their masters. This submissiveness should not be through fear. "They are not to be refractory, nor to pilfer, but to show entire and true fidelity, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior."² Paul's teaching on obedience, that "everyone should remain in the state in which he was called"³ at first appears extremely conservative and unjust. It has often been used down through history to defend the status quo. Minear tells us why this obedience was urged and shows clearly how this teaching is not as conservative or unjust as it first appears. In the first place, the New Testament writers and early Christians were not concerned with reorganizing society

¹ Including Col. 3:22-4:1, Eph. 6:5-9, 1 Tim. 6:1f, Tit. 2:9f, 1 Pet. 2:18-25.

² Tit. 2:9b,10.

³ 1 Cor. 7:20.

for they felt the second coming was close at hand. We have seen how they were more concerned with the heart and motive of the worker than the mode of work. They tried to show how Christians, both slaves and masters, could orientate their immediate tasks, within the new vocation of Christ. In doing so however, the New Testament writers provoked bitter resistance among conservative elements in Roman society because they assured the humblest slave a purpose and destiny as glorious as that possible for an emperor. The new attitude to life and work "proclaimed the transiency of all institutions (such as slavery) in which powerful men put their trust."¹ Secondly, while slaves were to be obedient to their masters Paul warned the slave owners to treat those under them "justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven."² Slave masters must dedicate all to Christ for they too had a definite link between their work and vocation. Thus, though the New Testament does not criticize directly the social conditions of the time, it provides for a new spirit and attitude that would eventually make slavery impossible. Further, the New Testament is not conservative to the extent that it approves all occupations. Those relying on idol worship, covetousness, stealing or greed for example, soon felt the impact of the Christian mission: "And a member of those who practiced magic arts

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 75.

² Col. 4:1.

brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all."¹ The Biblical writers made no attempt however to identify certain occupations with certain evils. All jobs are open to some vices and may be carried on for the wrong motive. The early Christians emphasized the importance of the right motive and attitude. They urged obedience and fidelity for slaves and Christian workers partly no doubt to avoid Christianity being identified as a dangerous rebel sect, partly because of the belief in the nearness of the second coming. The main reason however, was because they felt these qualities reflected the spirit of Christ more truly than violence and revolt. Christian workers by their witness in the place where they found themselves could transform and redeem the world from within, without the need for violent rebellion. This teaching does not imply blanket approval of the status quo but advocates a different means to bringing about the change desired. The means of the cross.

The second duty regarding work that should emerge in the new life of a Christian is faithful and honest service that the truth of the Christian doctrine may be commended to others. Christian workers do their daily work for Christ not just for earthly masters and therefore it should be done well. A redeemed worker will not

¹ Acts 19:19a.

be lazy or idle and will avoid being a financial burden to others, as Paul did,¹ in order that he may help others in time of need. "In all things I have shown you that by so toiling one must help the weak."² So those whose work involves jurisdiction over others will be faithful in their service and honest in their dealings. They will show their love for Christ and their fellow men by using their superior power on behalf of those who are under them.³ Rich and poor alike must be careful that they do not love and serve wealth,⁴ for "the cares of the world and delight in riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful."⁵ The congregation ought not to favor the rich, as the Epistle of James insists.⁶ Congregations become "judges with evil thoughts" if they seat carefully the man with "gold rings and fine clothing" while telling the "poor man in shabby clothing" to stand or, "'Sit at my feet.'"

Thirdly, the Christian will work in the spirit of the suffering servant willing to give all and suffer in patience. His new relationship with God should cause him in his daily work to 'bear all things, believe all things, hope all things'.⁷ Harsh and unjust treatment will be

¹ See 1 Thess. 2:9, 2 Thess. 3:6-13, Jas. 1:27, 2:14-17.

² Acts 20:35a.

³ Ephs. 6:9, Col. 4:1, 1 Tim. 6:17-19.

⁴ Heb. 13:5, Jn. 2:16, Mt. 6:19-24.

⁵ Mt. 13:22.

⁶ Jas. 2:1-8.

⁷ 1 Cor. 13:7.

received as it would be by Isaiah's suffering servant as seen in Christ. As 1 Peter 2:8 ff states, if one does right and yet suffers patiently he has God's approval. Christian workers must not fret over hard monotonous toil or difficult working conditions but do justly and suffer patiently for their Lord. They must follow Christ's example who, though he was reviled did not revile in return, and when he suffered "he did not threaten; but he trusted to him who judges justly."¹ All envy, anger and jealousy will have no place in their work and they must strive to do difficult and monotonous tasks cheerfully. Christian workers because of their allegiance to the Lord and their new life in the Lord are enabled to do these things, always to be ready to go the second mile. Their generosity will exceed the legal requirements of a contract or what they are paid to do. Every working associate whether friend or competitor must be viewed as a fellow child of God, beloved by him and treated with generosity and love exceeding the requirements of the law. Daily work then, is a place where all those who would follow Christ must 'deny themselves and take up their cross', giving themselves unselfishly in their work for the redemption of others. "For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it."² The principle of the cross must

¹ 1 Pet. 18:23b - see also Mt. 5:22-28, Col. 3:22-25.

² Mk. 9:36, 9:34-37.

be ever before the workers as a symbol of the plus, the extra he will give in love, and as the symbol of Christ, the suffering servant, reminding him to suffer patiently that he might redeem his fellow workers through his suffering and so contribute to the divine calling of the church, the Body of Christ.

These new attitudes to work that rebirth in Christ bring about are more than examples of private piety. They are, as Minear points out, signs of the coming Kingdom, the new age that Christ began. They are tokens of Christ's power to bring life in the midst of death, freedom from envy, strife, bitterness, worldly ambitions, rewards or penalties, frustration, and fear of insecurity in work. They are proofs of Christ's power to bring meaning and purpose to life and to daily labour. These new attitudes and duties in work of any type are a form of witness to the good news of Christ, a way to bring God's Word to others, a way to help the church, the called of God, to fulfill her calling. "A new history lies behind the appearance of each attitude, and a new future opens before it."¹

The Bible also contains interesting views regarding the place of work in life as a whole. Its relationship to rest and to worship. The Bible knows nothing of the modern problem of the use of leisure time. Its general

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 79.

view point is that it is folly to be idle between day-break and sunset, says Richardson.¹ Since the only leisure time was after darkness there was no problem of how this time should be spent. The Bible does, however, have clear teachings regarding rest, a different concept from our modern notion of leisure. Richardson feels that the primary purpose of the Sabbath as understood by the Old Testament writers was religious, not humanitarian, though humanitarian results, in the form of rest for all, slaves and free alike,² came as a by-product. The significance of the Biblical doctrine of the Sabbath, for work, is in its implication that man's chief end is not to work, even though this takes up most of his time, but rather to enjoy God forever. Man's work is like his Creator's crowned by rest. Richardson thinks that the story of Mary and Martha, with Jesus' comment that Mary, who visited with him, had chosen 'the better part', while Martha who had worked hard did not, endorses this principle. Work and worship are not identified in the Bible, neither are they regarded as totally unrelated. There is a time for work and a time for worship. Man's highest activity on earth is worship of God. Richardson believes that though the fourth commandment of Moses regarding the Sabbath says nothing about worship, nevertheless it refers to an 'active rest' not pure idleness. The type of rest God

¹ This section on work and rest is drawn largely from Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 53 ff.

² Ex. 20:10.

the Creator entered into when his work of creation was done. This rest is the Creator's highest activity. The Jews were right in interpreting this 'dynamic rest' in terms of worship and instruction. The writer to the Hebrews saw that the Sabbath day was a token of the heavenly rest to come to the people of God. The doctrine of the Sabbath then, has eschatological implications. Man's work here derives significance from its relation to the final crowning of heaven by rest in the world to come. As Paul shows in 1 Cor. 15:58 it is in the resurrection of Christ that we see the final vindication of all our work, "our assurance that all our toil and struggle and sufferings possess abiding worth: the short 'six days' of our working life on earth will be crowned with that heavenly rest wherein we shall survey our work and see that it is good."¹

We have seen that the Biblical writers did not identify work with worship as so many moderns do. Work and worship both are regarded in the Bible as being forms of divine service. Both can contribute to the fulfilling of the divine vocation of the church. The second way in which the Bible relates work and worship, according to Richardson, is that our work should be dedicated or offered to God in our worship. He goes on to show how the eucharist is the perfect symbol for the unity of work and

¹ Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 58.

worship.¹ The bread and wine are symbols of our souls and bodies and also the work of our hands and feet which we offer to God in the eucharist and which is given back to us as God's ineffable gift. Here is "the strange unbreakable link that exists between the bread that is won in the sweat of man's face and the bread of life that is bought without money and without price."² The eucharist then is the sanctification of all work done by Christians and the whole community. The congregation, says Richardson, should regard itself as a 'royal priesthood offering up the oblation of the whole working community in which their daily life is set'.

God chose Israel in his grace to be his people, he delivered them from slavery and revealed himself to them and through them. Israel responded to this act of divine grace and entered into a voluntary covenant relationship with God. Her response to God's gift must be unconditional loyalty and faithfulness. This involved a threefold service of hearing God's Word, reflecting it in her life as a nation, and bringing it to others. To refuse this service was to break the covenant and deny Israel's election. Every individual had a part to play through his daily occupation in helping his nation fulfill her mission. Some individuals such as prophets and kings were called to special tasks in helping the nation be faithful to

¹ For a more detailed account of this relationship see Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 67 ff. For an account of the Biblical meaning of the eucharist oblation, see p. 71 ff.

² Ibid., p. 70.

the covenant. Israel's people continually failed to render God this threefold service, especially the third corollary, and hence repudiated their election in spite of the warnings and guidance of the prophets, and God's punishment of Israel in the hope of renewing the covenant. The final event of this long struggle and failure of Israel to render God service was the sending of Jesus Christ. The Messiah Christ perfectly fulfilled the vocation of Israel, and through him God still reveals his love and purpose to mankind.

God through Christ calls man from death to life. Through Christ God forgives man, redeems him, and brings him into a right relationship with himself if man will accept the divine forgiveness and grace on faith. Those who have responded to God's grace and have accepted it on faith find themselves called or evoked through love and gratitude to serve God, to carry on the work of Christ. A new covenant in Christ's blood has been established. The church or new Israel consists of those so called or evoked. Having been founded in Christs' name, who perfectly fulfilled Israel's election, and in carrying on Christ's work, it is the sole heir of Israel's election. The desire and acceptance of service is a sign of the church's election or calling. Refusal to serve is refusal of that election. The work of Christ, the mission to which the church is called, involves hearing the Word of God as revealed in Christ, reflecting this Word, and

bringing this call of life to others. This is the shared calling or vocation of the church and each member of the body has his part to play. He is called by the Spirit, according to the gift he receives, to a special role which will contribute to the fulfilling of the shared vocation, whether it be as an apostle to provide the church with vocational guidance as did the prophets of old, or some other task such as healing, administration, teaching, etc. Every area of the Christian's life will be given to God in grateful love. This includes daily labour which is a necessary and natural part of man's existence. God intended that man should work and it is not only useless but morally wrong for man to seek a workless utopia, though it is right for him to seek to lessen the drudgery of work. Work then, was intended to be a blessing but man by his rebellion and estrangement from God has distorted this part of his life as well as other parts so that now work seems a curse to him. God through Jesus Christ however has redeemed the whole of life including work and through faith men may have his sins forgiven and be restored to a right relationship with God. His work now becomes meaningful, a means whereby he may strive in love to fulfill his special task and the shared vocation of all those who responded to God's grace, the church. He is 'still in the flesh', still finite and limited in his abilities and capacities, and work still brings temptations from drudgery, debilitating toil and trivial time

serving.

In and through his work he will accept 'the chastisement of a son', groaning with creation as one who shares the futility of a world that is passing away. In the midst of this agony he will receive the assurance of his adoption as a son.¹

This new relationship with God provides him with a new spirit and attitude of love which frees him from worldly ambitions, fear of insecurity, desire for material gain, meaningless work and frustration. The Christian finds his work has purpose and direction and that he receives the power to face the difficulties it may bring. The new relationship between work and vocation, the new heart and motive of the worker made possible by Christ are regarded as more important than the type of occupation entered by an individual. At the same time every job is given special importance because God may or may not be present in it and it is potentially a means toward helping the church fulfill her divine calling. Hence there is no hierarchy of jobs, some being potentially holier than others. Conversion to Christ may or may not bring a change in one's secular occupation. What it does bring is a new spirit and attitude of self giving love and patience, obedience and suffering to the worker regardless of his occupation.

Richardson² makes clear that there are several reasons why the Biblical view of work and its relation to

¹ Paul Minear, in J.O. Nelson, op. cit., p. 81, speaking on Rom. 8:16-21.

² Alan Richardson, op. cit., p. 49 ff.

vocation will be limited in its appeal. It will not appeal in itself to the non-Christian or the half Christian because it does not promise to make industry run smoothly without difficulties caused by human factors such as rivalry and envy. Nor does it advocate any definite political or sociological plan but leaves the individual worker to pass his own judgment upon these in the spirit of Christ. It will not appeal, says Richardson, to the 'progressive mind' because it advocates obedience. The New Testament claims that the 'natural order' of the world is such that a master-servant relationship will always exist in some form. Further, this view of work cannot be offered to the masses as a sweeping 'new deal' but is relevant to workers only as individuals who find salvation from sin and redemption of their whole life through Christ. However, the new relationship between work and vocation made possible by Christ "paradoxically is relevant to every social structure in every age of history, precisely because it is irrelevant to all of them."¹ The transformation of the worker and his motive and actions in work brought about by Christ is possible in any society, in any occupation, under any conditions. Further, says Richardson, though social conditions and working conditions vary from age to age the basic nature of man, and human relationships remain the same whether in a capitalistic

¹ Ibid., p. 50.

state or in a communist society. Thus, the New Testament teaching that rulers and ruled both have duties and service before selfish rights is relevant to all ages and conditions. The Biblical view of work and vocation is timeless in its appeal for it is of God. It is the thesis of this paper that this fundamental relationship between work and vocation has not always been clearly indicated in the developing life of the church. At times the themes of work and vocation, though always present in some form in church life have become restricted, separated or neglected.¹ Today the Biblical view of work and its relation to divine vocation is widely neglected. A re-examination of the subject and a new emphasis upon it is badly needed.

¹ See R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 82.

CHAPTER II

WORK AND VOCATION IN HISTORY

A. Introduction.

We have examined the Biblical concept of work and vocation and seen that the key to understanding the former lies in its relationship to the latter.

In the developing life of the Church, these two themes have always been present in some form, though not always with their relationship clearly indicated, and sometimes with restrictions and separations that have seriously affected the right understanding of both.¹

The primary concern of this paper is the problems of work and vocation in modern western industrial society and the Christian answer to these. Since similar working conditions and the problems arising from them are not encountered in the medieval era or indeed during the centuries from the New Testament times to the Industrial Revolution this period of history will be only briefly touched upon.

B. The Development of Work and Vocation in the Early Medieval Church.

The most distinctive and influential movement of the church during this period was monasticism. Calhoun states that it was this movement that systematized and expanded the church's theory and practice with respect to daily work. It also influenced greatly the church's concept of

¹ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 82.

vocation.

The specific relevance of this theory and practice (of work) to vocation, however, was understood very unevenly by the leaders of Christian thought, and almost not at all, one may suppose, by the rank and file.¹

It is difficult to trace in a brief space the gradual narrowing and then broadening of the church's understanding of vocation and its bearing on life from New Testament times to the Reformation.² A. Miller in his book Christian Faith and My Job³ uses the history of Christianity on the island of Iona to demonstrate this process. The first monastery on Iona was established in 563 A.D. by Columba and his Celtic monks. These men believed that "the claim of Christ is a total claim to life, both interior and exterior, spiritual and national, personal and social."⁴ While the philosophy of these missionary monks, says Miller, is not available in much detail today nevertheless their main intention is fairly clear. Their community included a balanced program of work and worship, study and toil.

Community life in Iona and the whole character of the missionary work were designed to witness to the claim of Christ to govern man's life in every area - in government and in education, in agriculture and in the home - so that the whole pattern of the society would embody a living worship of Christ.⁵

¹ Ibid., p. 83.

² For brief accounts of this process see Ernst Troeltsch, The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches, vol. 1, p. 121 ff. See also R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 101 ff.

³ Alexander Miller, Christian Faith and My Job, p. 21 ff.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 22, 23.

⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

This is typical of the rest of the church's attitude to work and vocation at that time; a position fairly similar to the Biblical view. In the early church before the time of Constantine "comparatively little attention was paid to the details of the Christians' working life."¹ When the problem was dealt with at all, as it was by such men as Clement of Rome, the Roman Hermas and Clement of Alexandria, it seems to be in the spirit of the latter's advice to Christians and pagans alike. They were not to abandon their occupations but to find God in the midst of them. The early Christian letter Ad Diognetum (dated 130-150 A.D.) shows the very principle of Paul regarding vocation and working out in practice.

For Christians are not distinguished from the rest of mankind either in locality or in speech or in customs. ... They find themselves in the flesh, and yet they live not after the flesh. Their existence is on earth, but their citizenship is in Heaven.²

After Constantine made Christianity respectable and safe the monastic movement began to gather momentum. Basil of the eastern church in his Rule for monks, that became the standard for Greek monasticism, included systematic, trained, devoted work. "Zealous work is as necessary as daily bread."³ Both Basil and Augustine felt that the basic law of life applied not only to those in monasteries

¹ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 89.

² Lightfoot, The Apostolic Fathers, pp. 505-6 - quoted in W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 41.

³ R.L. Calhoun quoting Reg. Fus. Tract. xxxvii, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 91.

but to all Christians and to all work.¹ Similarly the idea of vocation as the divine calling to repentance and faith and the calling to participate in the threefold service of the church, doing the work of Christ seems to have been prevalent during this period.

Occasionally the principle of divine calling is examined closely, in an argument against some erroneous view. But much more often the words denoting vocation are used in so matter-of-fact and unemphatic a way as to indicate that the idea was familiar and generally accepted.²

Gradually the Celtic missionary spirit at Iona was replaced by inertia and passivity. About 1100 A.D. the Celtic community was succeeded by a Benedictine monastery. The Benedictines, one of the strongest medieval monastic orders, were enjoying a revival at this time under the leadership of Bernard of Clairvaux. The pattern of their life on Iona, even the architecture of their church reflects, according to Miller, the standard medieval pattern. The church consisted of a nave and choir, separated by a wooden screen. The choir was a room for monks only, while the general public were allowed to gather in the nave, screened off from the holy table. The monks with their threefold vow of poverty, chastity, and obedience were free from the involvements of the daily secular world and so presumably able to follow Jesus more closely. They were the only ones allowed therefore, to gather around

¹ R.L. Calhoun, commenting on Augustine's On the Work of Monks, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 92.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op.cit., p. 102.

the holy table in the choir room. This is typical of the double standard of morality prevalent in medieval times. There were, according to this view, two standards of Christian living. Only those who withdrew from worldly works and family cares could attain unto the highest. Those who were involved in the daily grind were forced to a secondary level. "Medievalism said in effect that facts were too strong for the vision, that the full following of Jesus was impossible for men leading a secular life; it compromised on a double standard."¹ Those who carried on in secular life unable to lead the higher life were not left to damnation. "The theory was that the sin and need of men outside the screen, of men entangled with the affairs of this world, was to be made up for, as it were, by the extra devotion and costly practices of the monkish community within the choir."² W.R. Forrester³ shows how this tendency to a double standard was present as early as 350 A.D. He quotes from a letter by Eusebius that clearly shows the latter's belief in "two kinds of Christian behaviour, each with a different standard, by which it was to be judged." A secondary piety was afforded to those Christians who did not withdraw from worldly affairs.

This concept which was firmly entrenched by 1100 A.D., as we have seen, Forrester attributes to two main causes.

¹ Alexander Miller, op. cit., p. 25.

² Ibid., p. 26.

³ W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 42.

First, the Christians soon found it difficult to carry out the demands of Christian living in the Graeco-Roman society. Once the intense expectation of Christ's second coming had abated the gospel was translated into workable terms and compromises with the surrounding society were reached. This 'workable' gospel did not satisfy the more avid Christians who wanted to carry out the absolute ethics of the New Testament. To do this they began to experiment with different forms of withdrawing from the world. The more the church spread and became identified with the world, says Troeltsch, the more difficult it became for her to exercise love and gentleness and higher rose the value of monasticism, "in which alone it was possible to redress the balance by a rigid practice of Christian principles."¹ The second reason for the double standard, was the influence of Greek thought and Oriental asceticism on Christian thinking. The seeking of perfection that Jesus speaks of in Matthew is interpreted in that light as the ascetic life of contemplation in which the body and material influences are reduced to a minimum. "The sacred and the secular in this view differed not merely in degree but in kind."² Only the religious in convents had a true 'vocation' in the sense of seeking perfection, or sharing in the church's mission with a special task to be accom-

¹ Ernst Troeltsch, op. cit., vol. 1, p. 126.

² W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 45.

plished through their work. Those in secular work kept the world running "at the cost of condemning their souls to a second best spiritual life."¹ Forrester feels that Clement of Alexandria's Protrepticus written before 189 A.D. represents the middle position between the gnostic idea of complete separation from the world and no separation. The idea of different degrees of perfection in Christian living and the concept of two distinct kinds of Christian living seem to have been confused however, and the latter view hardened in the church and became standardized. Bishop Kirk² feels that the separation of Christian living into two distinct kinds saved the church at the time when masses of pagans were entering it. Forrester claims that if this is so it was at the terrible price of

creating a distinction between sacred and secular, as if they were different kinds of life, 'that the Christian life is of two distinct characters'. As a result, in the Roman view the true 'vocation' has been the call to the monastery or ministry, and Rome till lately has had no satisfactory doctrine of secular vocation.³

As the feudal society developed its hierarchies in the church and state the distinction between the monastic 'vocation' and the life of the ordinary Christian grew sharper and wider. "Ordinary work and Christian vocation in its now restricted sense seemed very far apart."⁴

At the same time as the concept of two kinds of

¹ Loc. cit.

² See Ibid., p. 49 in reference to K.E. Kirk, Vision of God.

³ Ibid., p. 49.

⁴ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 104.

Christian life hardened in the church and medieval society developed new aristocratic patterns of inequality, the monasteries needed to be reformed repeatedly. The tendency was for the monks to seek perfection through a life of ease, luxury and contemplation rather than a balance of worship and vigorous labour. Reforms at Cluny, Celtaux, and Clairvaux helped to remedy this tendency to some extent. St. Francis of Assisi in the early thirteenth century recalled the church to the demand for simplicity and devoted service.

It is ironic and tragic that before the end of his brief journey, 'the little brother of the poor' saw his vision rejected and his devoted way of life corrupted by some of his own friars.¹

These reforms, the changing character of society, and the new intellectual development of the late Middle Ages brought about a revaluation of the life of the laity and new spiritual and intellectual life to the clergy and "religious". This development in turn helped pave the way for the Reformation. Through the influence of men like Gregory VII the attempt was made to bring the pattern of life found in the monasteries to all church members. Gregory tried to enforce monastic rules on all the clergy while the laymen on their own initiative began to develop "quasi-monastic" military orders and guilds of merchants and skilled craftsmen. The Hospitalers and Templars are

¹ Ibid., p. 96.

examples of the military orders. The guilds of armorers, goldsmiths etc. with their rules of masters, apprentices and journeymen were in a sense a lay counterpart of the monastic and clerical orders.¹ Christian universities which sprang up during this period organized on a similar pattern. These

laymen's reform movements and quasi-monastic lay brotherhoods, some orthodox, some heretical, seeking a renewal of simplicity, integrity, and even democracy in church life, ... bespoke a rising spirit of protest against too sharp a division between laymen and the hierarchy.²

Thomas Aquinas successfully fused the conservatism and radicalism of the new age in his concept of the church and state as closely knit hierarchies. God through Christ gives authority to the Pope as Peter's successor who in turn delegates power to clergy as spiritual heads and the emperor as temporal head. This theory of society is developed largely from Aristotle's concept in Politics. It includes a doctrine of work "that foreshadows Karl Marx's thesis that economic activity is primary in human civilization."³ Each worker with his particular useful sort of work suited to his abilities and inclinations contributes to the welfare of society. Some types of work are more useful than others but each kind derives its significance from its relationship to the living organism of society. Aquinas felt that God ordered such a form of society. "In

¹ This section is largely drawn from R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 98 ff.

² Ibid., p. 98.

³ Ibid., p. 99.

the hierarchy of work, 'spiritual works' - prayer, preaching, and the like - rank higher than 'manual works' in their contribution to corporate life; though all are necessary."¹

William of Ockham, Marsiglio of Padua in Italy, John Wyclif, John Hus and others developed theories that sought to reverse Aquinas' perspective. Though none of this newer theology expressly reevaluated everyday work in theological terms, it helped directly toward that further step.² These men put forth such ideas as the supreme and sufficient authority of the Scriptures, a democratic concept in principle of both church and state. By Wyclif's affirmation of the Augustinian view that every believer holds his title to all things directly from God, there was the expression of the idea of all laymen becoming priests. No man is dependent upon any other for his ultimate status among men, for his dignity and freedom.

The universal condition of human tenure of authority, great or small in extent, was faithfulness of service to God and man. ... Whatever spiritual authority a priest or pope may rightly claim is just as properly to be claimed by any faithful Christian.³

Another major development that helped to bring together again work and vocation in a right relationship was the growth and spread of mysticism. Under men like St. Victor, Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Francis, and Bonaventure,

¹ Loc. cit.

² Ibid., p. 101.

³ Loc. cit.

mysticism grew in prevalence and persuasiveness. The mystics stressed the need for careful discipline of mind and body in preparation for and hope for the vision of God. No one could achieve the vision through effort however, if the vision came, it came as the gift of God. Those who were engaged in the quest and especially those to whom the vision was granted were regarded as 'called' to be friends of God. Though the monastic life was still regarded as the best preparation for the vision, seers, like Jean Gerson and John Tauler, "a powerful popular preacher, began to urge that the vision of God may come to the ordinary layman as well as to the devoted cleric or monk."¹ Even these two converging movements, the new theology and changing social structure and the development of mysticism failed to bridge the false antithesis that had grown up between sacred and secular, the concept that true religious vocation was confined to those within the monastery. Aquinas, St. Francis of Assisi and others from every period fought against this but prior to the Reformation and even today among Roman Catholics there is the belief that "life 'in the world', in the family, and in affairs, disqualifies from the true and typical spiritual life."²

¹ Ibid., p. 106.

² W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 50.

C. Development of the Themes of Work and Vocation in the Reformation Church.

The two themes, daily work and divine vocation, long separated where the double standard of Christian life prevailed, and in the late Middle Ages beginning once more to converge, were brought together with startling emphasis in Luther's teaching, and in Calvinism (especially in England and North America) to 1660. Thereafter they fell apart once more, with unhappy results.¹

Luther cut at the roots of the whole medieval hierarchical scheme by his rejection of the concept of human merit and man's ability to earn God's grace. Man is unable to make God his debtor. The life of perfection is required of all and no one is able to achieve it and win merit let alone surpass the requirement and store up merit either in the monastery or out of it. Man is justified by God's grace not by his 'good works'. This grace he receives on faith and then 'good works' follow out of grateful love.

He, therefore, who does not wish to go astray with those blind men, must look beyond works, and laws and doctrines about works; nay, turning his eyes from works, he must look upon the person, and ask how that is justified. For the person is justified and saved not by works nor by laws but by the Word of God, that is, by the promise of His grace, and by faith, that the glory may remain God's, Who saved us not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy by the word of His grace, when we believed.²

The man made right with God by his grace will strive to serve him; works "do not make a man good, but are done by a man already made good through faith in the truth of

¹ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 106.

² "A Treatise on Christian Liberty", from the Works of Martin Luther, vol II, p. 332 ff.

God."¹ Luther thought that the fulfilment of this duty in worldly affairs was the highest form which the moral activity of the individual could assume. "The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world. That was his calling."² This concept gave a new value to the plain man and the occupations of the laity. Luther gave moral justification to worldly activity. Man finds himself in two kingdoms. There is God's kingdom of grace where men are enabled to live in faith and love, sustained and renewed daily by repentance and forgiveness, and then there is the created kingdom of nature and history. This kingdom is essentially good but has been distorted by man's sin and devils. Though it makes living difficult man cannot withdraw from either kingdom. A true believer will find God present however, in nature and history and in all situations of daily life. "The word of God will come to him in all his human relationships, and his work on behalf of his fellow men will be at the same time an affirmation of trust and praise toward God."³ Luther revived the true Biblical insight that there is no secular world which is apart from God, that

¹ "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church", Ibid., vol. II, p. 248 ff.

² Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, p. 80.

³ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 108.

a man may serve God through his daily work in the world. Though there are varieties of service and diversities of gifts all believers are called of God to work for him each in his own way. "Any sort of serviceable status in society, through which one may serve his neighbours, deserves to be regarded as divinely ordained calling."¹ Thus all believers have a vocation, the layman as well as the clergy.

A cobbler, a smith, a peasant, every man, has the office and function of his calling, and yet all alike are consecrated priests and bishops, and every man should by his office or function be useful and beneficial to the rest, so that various kinds of work may all be united for the furtherance of body and soul, just as the members of the body all serve one another.²

Luther then, saw a close relationship between divine vocation and daily work. In this sense Luther uses vocation according to the second dictionary definition outlined in chapter one, and Calhoun's second meaning, 'to choose, to select and assign to an office, a task or a special status'.³ God calls men to repentance and faith and his word may come to men through their daily work. He also calls all believers to a special task or outward mode of life where the believer may serve Him. Every believer whether 'a simple householder, a magistrate, or a prince can know his status as a calling appointed by God'.⁴ Luther seems to have assumed a shared calling of all be-

¹ Ibid., p. 108.

² "Address to the Christian Nobility of the German nation", Martin Luther, in H.E. Fosdick, Great Voices of the Reformation, pp. 99,100.

³ See chapt. I, p. 10.

⁴ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, op. cit., p. 108.

lievers, the work of Christ to which these special tasks and callings contribute.

Calvin and the whole Reformed wing of the protestant movement used the term vocation with essentially the same meaning as Luther. They too helped to restore the close relationship between daily work and the calling of God, the 'work' of Christ. Every task, every hour should be dedicated to God, for from faith such 'good works spring'. Men should not seek worldly possessions, but out of grateful love to God they should strive to serve their neighbour.

We and our possessions together belong to God. This view involves the hallowing of each man's vocation. It is 'the post assigned', to be faithfully exercised. It may be exchanged for another only for God's glory; and no task is so humble that it is not very precious in God's sight.¹

Calvin visualized a system whereby God has assigned distinct duties to each person.

In all circumstances the recognition of this call of the Lord is the beginning of right acting, and he who fails to act with reference to it will not keep the right path ... Hence we have the exalting of daily work, every detail of life being given a potential religious significance.²

Every Christian should bear the cares and difficulties of his particular vocation or calling. Calvin frowned on idleness and raised activity and labour into the religious sphere, making it the moral duty of all believers. Idleness is sinful. All work has meaning and importance be-

¹ J.T. McNeill, The History and Character of Calvinism.

² A. Dakin, Calvinism.

cause no work is so mean and sordid as to have no value in the eyes of God. Calvin himself firmly rejected the idea that worldly prosperity is an indication or proof of an individual's election. On the contrary Calvin's commentaries clearly show that he felt worldly goods and possessions were a cause for anxiety about the soul rather than any assurance of salvation. An interesting feature of the Calvinistic use of vocation particularly in Geneva, Scotland and England was the fact that Christian vocation was understood to require active social and political reform. "Government must be carried out as a trust from God, and rulers must be fellow servants, not despots, in relation to those whom they rule."¹ The vocation of magistrate or political ruler was one of the most honorable of all the 'vocations' or callings from God. Calvin like Luther, interpreted man's daily work and status in life as a divine calling from God.

The reformers then, understood man's response to God's call in terms of worship and work. The believer should respond to God's love by dedicating his whole life to his service. This includes one's daily labour. Thus common work receives a new status and importance as an area of life that men should dedicate to God. Here the reformers regain a great Biblical insight. This inter-

¹ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 109.

pretation of Christian vocation and its relation to work became an accepted element in Reformation theology even though Luther and Calvin did not treat it as such systematically. Later followers of the reformers did treat the subject of Christian vocation more systematically,¹ and many of the catechisms and confessions of that period deal with it in reference to God's acts in relation to man, or in regard to man's response to those acts.

The Puritans dealt with work and vocation quite thoroughly. They thought of God's revelation through Jesus Christ as a general calling. Each persons' awareness of this call and his response in worship and work constitutes, they felt, a personal calling. God's word and his call both general and personal is extended only through the community in covenant relationship with him. Individuals then, who have been called are called through the community, they respond as part of that community and are vocationally guided by it. The Puritans were concerned with God's acts, as revealed through his word, in contrast to the mystics' goal of obtaining a vision of God. They exalted the active life therefore as opposed to the contemplative life encouraged by the mystics. Work and daily labour is one place where an individual can serve God and the community in grateful appreciation for divine grace. Prosperity they felt is not a clear sign of divine favour. It may or may

¹ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 118. Most of this section on the Puritans is also drawn from his chapter.

not be an indication of such. All believers were warned against covetousness and the dangers of prosperity. The believer as a worker is not free to go his own selfish way but should subject this area of life as all other areas to the sovereign will of God as received and interpreted by the covenanted community. In their praise of the active life then, the early Puritans "were true followers of the Reformers, although they went beyond the Reformers in their understanding of the role of the community in covenant relation with God and in their systematic development of the doctrine of vocation."¹

In order to understand the present conditions of work and attitude toward work in the American continent today we must examine the development of present industrial working conditions as brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of the spirit of capitalism and the peculiar American version that might be called "Yankee Enterprise" or the "American gospel of work". We will not attempt to outline the various causes and forces that produced the Industrial Revolution. Certainly the Protestant ethic, the development of the spirit of capitalism and its later version in the "American gospel of work", the whole Renaissance movement with its increasing secularization, and the discovery of new countries played a large part,

¹ Ibid., p. 119.

as well as more immediate causes such as the invention of machines and discovery of new sources of power.¹ Hand in glove with the Industrial Revolution was the rise of capitalism and the independent ideal in America, "Yankee Enterprise", which both contributed to the Industrial Revolution and in turn was itself partly produced by this revolution. Another cause of this spirit of capitalism seems to have been an activist Protestantism. But as Michaelsen points out "if (the American) has drawn upon an activist Protestantism to support his work, he has shaped that Protestantism to meet his own needs."² We will try to indicate this shaping of Protestantism. In any study of history it is difficult to separate completely economic factors from philosophical and religious ideals and to determine which are the primary causes of any historical event. For this reason Weber's thesis³ that the "Protestant Ethic" paved the way for the development of the spirit of capitalism is inadequate. It fails as Michaelsen points out⁴ to put sufficient emphasis on the influence of economic factors upon Protestantism and the consequent changes in Protestant theology. It is not the purpose of this thesis to propound a philosophy of history. We will therefore, accept Michaelsen's view⁵ that the "American gospel of work"

¹ See W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 152 ff.

² R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 117.

³ Max Weber, op. cit.

⁴ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 155.

⁵ Ibid., p. 117.

arose out of the background of Protestantism and the pressures and challenges of a new continent rich in natural resources.

D. Development of the Themes of Work and Vocation During the Industrial Revolution and Rise of Capitalism.

The Industrial Revolution with new methods of mass production and the conquering of a new virgin continent with an abundance of natural resources helped to bring about the present conditions of work and the current attitude toward it as expressed in the "American gospel of work". By the Industrial Revolution we mean "the change that transforms a people with peasant occupations and local markets into an industrial society with world wide connections."¹ The development in England is typical. The discoveries of Abraham Darby and Henry Colt of methods for using coal in the making of iron revolutionized the metal industry and created the 'black country' in England. The invention of the flying shuttle, the spinning jenny and the mule revolutionized the textile industry from a guild craft to big industry. The harnessing of steam power in the eighteenth century by men like Watt and Cartwright made industry free from water power and gave it new impetus to expand. The satisfaction of increasing demands for new markets and especially for more raw materials such as cotton was made possible by improved trans-

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. 12, p. 304.

portation and the discovery and opening up of new foreign lands. In England the great road and canal building period of the eighteenth century (in consequence partly, of the agrarian revolution), the development of a railroad system during the nineteenth century, and the development of the steamship gave industry new impetus. The metal and machine industry was vastly improved and enlarged by new chemical discoveries and the discoveries of men like Henry Bessemer, the brothers Siemens, and Snelus. Other countries later in their start of an Industrial Revolution began to demand machines and railroads from Britain and mechanical engineering became an important industry in England. English labour, capital, machines and industrial know-how turned peasant societies into industrial societies.

"When the 20th century opened England had powerful industrial rivals both in and out of Europe."¹ The nineteenth century was the century of steam. Near its close the discovery and harnessing of electricity paved the way for the even greater industrial expansion that the twentieth century has witnessed. The still untapped possibilities of this power source and recent development of atomic energy are preparing the way for still further industrialization.

With the Industrial Revolution came many ills as

¹ Ibid., vol. 12, p. 305. Most of the preceeding information was drawn from the article on the Industrial Revolution in the Encyclopedia Britannica by Arnold Toynbee, "The Industrial Revolution of the Eighteenth Century in England", and also from Hammond and Hammond, "The Rise of Modern Industry".

well as improvements. There were exciting opportunities opened to individual talent and character. Mass production resulted in the great cheapening of commodities and the availability of many more luxuries to the common man. "But the Industrial Revolution has produced certain results that are common to industrial civilization."¹ Increasing technicalization has brought many problems and attempted remedies to all industrial societies. These include factory control acts, unemployment, depersonalization, hours of work regulation, wage scales, unions, strikes, meaningless work involved in assembly line production etc.

Meanwhile certain changes in Protestant theology regarding work and vocation were taking place. A new individualism was arising. Calvin, Luther and especially the early Puritans as we have seen, while rejecting the claims of the Papacy and Holy Roman Empire, still retained much of the feudal sense of solidarity, of community and the need for order and control in society. George Fox and his independent individualism and interpretation of Scripture foreshadowed, says Calhoun, this next major step in Protestant development. The reformers never intended to imply freedom to do as one felt inclined when they spoke of Christian freedom, but later followers often seemed to interpret it as such. The Thirty Years' War, the Civil War and Cromwell's rule in Britain were disruptions that

¹ Ibid., p. 306.

helped break down the old sense of organic unity present among the early reformers. Old restraints on individual action began to disappear.¹ Examples of this increasing individualism include the weakening of traditional condemnations on usury, the recognition of prosperity as a sign of divine favour, and the claim of business to be free from moral criticisms by the church. The Reformation's rediscovery of the Biblical relationship of work and vocation became gradually distorted and lost once again. Rules and restrictions that were imbedded in the Calvinistic state could not keep the trade of either Europe or the rapidly developing New World under control. With the passage of time Calvin's emphasis on the active life became more and more vulgarized. Calvin had firmly rejected any theory that prosperity is proof of election but

a man's historical influence often appears ironically at variance with his own conscious aims. Calvin's insistence on diligence and frugality, his horror of waste of time or of goods, his permitting interest on money under strict limitations of equity and charity, and his similarly guarded permission of a change of one's vocation are justly held to have contributed something to the development of capitalistic industry and business.²

Calvin's doctrines regarding industry and frugality were slowly twisted "to underwrite the motivations of a developing and expanding capitalism."³ It was not until political

¹ For a good account of the rise of individualism see R.H. Tawney, Religion and the Rise of Capitalism.

² "Calvin's commentaries are virtually flooded with statements of this sort", - see J.T. McNeill, op. cit.

³ W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, Ethics in a Business Society, p. 13.

and economic changes had prepared a congenial environment for their growth however, that "the tendencies of Puritanism, which were to make it later a potent ally of the movement against the control of economic relations in the name either of social morality or of the public interest"¹ revealed themselves.

Gradually the individual came to regard poverty as a sign of moral delinquency. The laying up of goods and acquiring wealth were part of the virtuous pattern of the righteous man. "The eighteenth century dawned on a vigorously expanding commercial economy in western Europe and North America, whose successful members felt that the Church, and presumably the Lord, was on their side."² There were some groups like the Quakers who still preached self-denial and sacrifice but their number was shrinking. Attitudes were undergoing a subtle change.

'No question', wrote a Puritan pamphleteer, 'but it (riches) should be the portion rather of the godly than of the wicked, were it good for them; for godliness has the promises of this life as well as the life to come'. In its ultimate vulgarization, 'God helps those who help themselves'.³

Adam Smith in 1776 expressed this new doctrine in his An Inquiry into the Wealth of Nations. The influence of this book in the nearly two centuries that have followed has been incalculable, as Childs and Cater point out. The two main principles that division of labour is essential

¹ R.H. Tawney, op. cit., p. 226.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 110.

³ W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, op. cit., p. 33.

to productiveness and the accumulation of capital is necessary for the efficient division of labour form the basic economic philosophy of Smith. His book "has been in a sense the bible of the classical school of liberal economists." His philosophy was "the great symphonic theme of the industrial revolution and mass production."¹ Later disciples have carried Adam Smith's ideal far beyond his original concept. There were many limitations that Smith himself put on competition and Childs and Cater feel that Smith, though generally credited as being the founder of laissez-faire economy, would be shocked and startled at the way the concept has been strained and stretched. Thus seventeenth century and eighteenth century Calvinists busily conquering new worlds and participating in rapidly expanding commercial enterprises moved further and further from Luther's great insights on work and vocation. "A communal ethic was supplanted by an individualistic ethic, as the covenant theology (of the early Puritans) disintegrated."² Tawney claims that among the numerous forces which brought about the new economic organization and new type of economic character, "some not inconsiderable part may reasonably be ascribed to the emphasis on the life of business enterprise as the appropriate field for Christian endeavor, and on the qualities needed for success in it, which was characteristic of Puritanism."³ These qualities and the admiration of them remained long after the religious

¹ Ibid., pp. 34,35.

² R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 119.

³ R.H. Tawney, op. cit., p. 270.

influence and restraints which imposed them had disappeared.

Calhoun states that the next step of this modern development and dissociation of work from divine vocation also took place during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. More and more the business world freed itself from churchly and governmental control. The will of God was not only equated with successful business practice, as we have seen, but it was often regarded as having no effective relevance to worldly affairs. "The logical end of the process for more and more busy people, was to disregard or deny the reality of divine will altogether. Faith in human progress replaced faith in God."¹ The Christian doctrine of vocation, during the eighteenth century was secularized to the point where it meant little more than one's occupation. Most theologians, in many cases strongly influenced by pietism, were more concerned with "religious experience" than a doctrine of vocation. "By the nineteenth century American Protestantism had almost completely succumbed to the American gospel of work", writes R.S. Michaelsen.² The excellent study of American Protestantism of this period by H.F. May indicates that this is true.³ May feels that the "summit of complacency" was reached in the period from 1861-1867. O.B. Frothingham's The Religion of Humanity was the principal manifesto,

¹ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 111.

² See R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit.

³ H.F. May, Protestant Churches and Industrial America, - this book gives a fairly exhaustive account of the Protestant Church's attitude to work and industry from 1828-1895.

according to May, of the post-war decade. He writes:

If the artisan, forgetting the apparent discord between himself and the man who employs him, could be made to appreciate the accumulated treasure of patient heroism expressed by that hated word 'capital' ... if the sinful could have it borne in upon them that that social order they regard as their persecutor, their tyrant, their tormentor, is in truth their best friend ... the tough old heart would begin to throb and bleed again.¹

The religious life was openly assumed either to demand or assume prosperity. Service to God was twisted to harmonize with seeking and gaining wealth. As Michaelsen states, "calling" became associated with a highly emotional religious experience of conversion which had little bearing on daily work. The only change advocated by most theologians was in terms of charitable works, missionary enterprises and lesser moral reforms in regard to swearing and drinking. Thus Horace Bushnell urged that the type of benevolence most fitting for the high calling of the merchant was to set aside inferior and spoilt goods which he would have to sell normally at a great loss to himself. "These carefully selected materials", Bushnell said in a sermon published in 1873, "should be sold to the poor at low prices."²

In July 1877 the first great shock came to expanding industrialism. A ten per cent wage cut on most of the railroads east of the Mississippi brought about a bloody

¹ Quoted by H.F. May, op. cit., p. 82, from O.B. Frothingham, The Religion of Humanity, p. 147.

² W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, op. cit., p. 138.

labour battle. The Protestant Church tended to side with capital and Henry Ward Beecher, a prominent Congregationalist minister, denounced the railroad employees for not bearing their poverty more nobly. "What is the use of a civilization that simply makes men incompetent to live under the conditions which exist ... "1 Russell Conwell's popular sermon "Acres of Diamonds" which earned him eight million dollars, expressed, in the opinion of Childs and Cater, the acclimatization of Christianity to capitalistic America. "To secure wealth is an honorable ambition, and is one great test of a person's usefulness to others ... I say, get rich, get rich!"2 The conventional clerical view of society and work during this period was deeply entwined with Calvinistic theology. Sinful man should not debate the justice of eternal punishment, neither should he criticize the status quo or the laws governing society. "Poverty, like sin, was part of the structure of the universe."3 Revivalism was just as hostile to social reform. "Though revivalistic doctrines were less deadening to the will they usually implied an extreme of religious individualism which left little ground for the reform of worldly society."4

In the United States particularly, the doctrine of Christian vocation and its relation to daily work finally

1 Quoted in Ibid., p. 137.

2 Ibid., p. 137.

3 H.F. May, op. cit., p. 83.

4 Loc. cit.

gave way completely to the American gospel of work. R.S. Michaelsen gives an excellent summary of the main characteristics of this doctrine that has had such an influence on contemporary American industrialism.¹ He claims that the basic assumption of the gospel of work is "that hard work will gain all that one needs in this life - the needs of life usually being thought of in materialistic terms."² Any man with determination and ability can work his way up like Henry Ford and Andrew Carnegie. Only the inefficient or lazy will fail. This is supported, says Michaelsen, by the prevailing tenets of the classical or laissez-faire economists. We have already examined some of these. Michaelsen divides the main views of this doctrine into four tenets. First, the primacy of the economic sphere in a man's life and the assumption that man's basic motivation is the desire for material prosperity. Secondly, confidence in the individual to succeed in this regard if he follows his own selfish desires. Thirdly, the claim that society will be best served when individuals are allowed to follow their desires; and finally, "the view that the primary function of the state is to 'let the individual alone' in that pursuit and to protect the property which he accumulates."³ The worker has often been regarded as an "economic man" or a "slot machine" man, as

¹ Much of this section was taken from R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 121 ff. See also W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, op. cit., p. 136 ff, and Max Weber, op. cit., p. 47 ff.

² R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p.121.

³ Loc. cit.

a high speed tool to be used as other useful machinery. In its individualistic approach the gospel of work has resulted in the use by employers of the individual wage incentive and production quotas. This puts each individual in competition with his fellow workers, prohibiting a spirit of community and fellowship and resulting in loneliness. Optimism is also characteristic of the American gospel of work, an almost naive belief in the ability of individuals and societies to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. Many felt that through the pursuit of selfish interests production would rise, the worker would receive higher profits and so more opportunity to expand industry, society would have a higher standard of living, a Utopia would soon arrive. This gospel of work has greatly influenced the current attitude toward work and vocation.

The industrial system which has grown so rapidly in America in the last seventy-five years, and which now plays such a dominant role in the American economy, was organized in large part by men who were converts to the gospel of work and believers in the theories of classical economics.¹

In Brunner's opinion "Marxism is only a last phase of bourgeois capitalism."² Like capitalism and the gospel of work the nineteenth century Marxism adopted a philosophy which places economic values as the highest and most genuine reality. Marx, it is true, did a lot to overthrow

¹ Loc. cit.

² Emil Brunner, Christianity and Civilisation, p. 60.

the old Aristotelian concept of "low" work and "higher" cultural activities of man. He idealized the "working man", the class of the industrial proletariat. The labourer for him, not the philosopher, is the "real man". "The working man is the hero of the social revolution and its eschatology. He is the centre of the new myth and content of the new religion."¹ The transfer of values from the spiritual to the material economic scale of values had already taken place before Marx. For communist and capitalist money was the all important god, it 'ruled the world'. "The dispute between Marx and the capitalists is merely concerned with the question who shall have money."² Both capitalism and Marxism then, assume that the economic motive is the primary and highest value in man - "19th century economics, both capitalistic and Marxist, represents a practical materialism in which man's life and economy are ultimately identical."³

Toward the end of the nineteenth century a new movement of progressive social Christianity arose known as the Social Gospel Movement. Their spokesmen advocated a halt to the religious sanctification of uninhibited wealth getting.

In 1876 Protestantism presented a massive, almost unbroken front in its defense of the social status quo. Two decades later social criticism had penetrated deeply into each major church. Some of the most

¹ Loc. cit.

² Loc. cit.

³ Ibid., p. 61.

prominent Protestant leaders were calling for social reform ..."¹

Three major periods of labour strife in 1877, 1886, and 1892-94 shocked many Christian thinkers out of their optimistic complacency. They began to realize that the formulas of men like Henry Ward Beecher had been shattered by unanswerable events. An increasing number of Protestant leaders began to criticize the existing social order. They saw the incompatibility between the gospel of Christ and the the laissez-faire American gospel of work. They saw the weaknesses of the extreme individualism, optimism, and materialism of the gospel of work. "Although they did very little to reconstruct the doctrine of vocation they did help to lay the ground work for that reconstruction," especially by their criticism of the theories of classical economics "and their renewed appreciation for man's social nature."² By 1895 the social gospel was mature. Leaders' pronouncements were no longer couched in timid guarded language. Younger leaders appeared and developed the earlier doctrines on a more complex level. Men like Walter Rauschenbusch gave more thorough theological exposition to the doctrines of pioneers like Gladden and Newton.

Though the First World War was a drastic blow to the optimistic and ordinarily pacifistic assumptions of progressive Christians, the Social Gospel retained a considerable measure of vitality during the early

¹ H.F. May, op. cit., p. 91. For an excellent account of the Social Gospel and its relation to Protestantism and industry see H.F. May, op. cit., p. 170 ff and W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, op. cit., p. 139 ff.

² R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p.120.

nineteen-twenties, when many forms of progressivism went into temporary eclipse.¹

The drastic events of the last two decades, the turn toward a more transcendent and "realistic" theology in Europe and America cutting away much of the theological support of the Social Gospel, have caused, says May, many Protestant leaders since the twenties to turn away from the Social Gospel. "In the last bitter decade, religious progressivism has lost prestige and self-confidence along with all varieties of optimistic liberalism."² It still claims many followers and some of its leaders feel it still has an important part to play, though perhaps in a new form. There is a new awareness then, that was lacking in the Social Gospel. This is an awareness of the stubbornness of evil in the world and the depth and persistence of human sin. A search has begun therefore, for a deeper understanding of the nature and destiny of man.

A highly significant part of this search lies in that body of thought known as "Christian realism" of which Reinhold Niebuhr is probably the best-known American exponent. ... While there is no such thing as a Christian economic system, there are immediate Christian goals for economic life.³

There has been a renewed effort to revive the Christian doctrine of vocation and its relevance to work in our modern industrial society for we are eye witnesses to "a great reversal of all the tendencies which made for

¹ H.F. May, op. cit., p. 203.

² Loc. cit.

³ W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, op. cit., pp. 148, 149.

the independence of economic activity from the total demands of society and from ethics."¹

¹ Quoted in World Council of Churches Assembly, Christian Hope, from V.A. Demant, Religion and the Decline of Capitalism. For an excellent account of recent social trends, the decline of capitalism and the reformation of socialism, etc., and the attitude of Protestant Churches regarding these see World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., section on "Social Questions - The Responsible Society in a World Perspective."

CHAPTER III

WORK AND VOCATION TODAY

A. Introduction.

Though laissez-faire capitalism as the dominant economic philosophy of western society is on a rapid decline, technology, mechanization and capitalistic techniques with all their repercussions are not. The secularization of work and its separation from divine vocation is virtually complete. This secularization of life in general and work in particular is spreading with the rise of technical societies throughout the nations of the East also. The secular idealism, the new messianism and optimism, the confidence that man may, through new techniques control his own destiny and happiness, so characteristic of the industrial West is spreading rapidly to the East.¹ There are many problems for the worker in modern industrial society, both East and West, that have been created by the new industrial techniques brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and created by the current attitude toward work arising from the development of secularism and the primacy of economic values. These problems continue to remain and even increase though many capitalistic theories are now largely out of fashion.

We will attempt to outline some of these problems, primarily those that confront the industrial worker,

¹ See Kathleen Bliss, in The Student World, 2d quarter, 1950, p. 114 ff.

particularly the "industrial proletariat" or the mass production worker. While this group of workers represents only a small portion of the total working population in the United States and even less in Canada we will concentrate upon them because their problems are becoming increasingly typical of all modern workers. The growing class of clerks, managers, salesmen and industrial executives, a direct product of advancing industrialism, face many of the same problems confronting the assembly line worker because they work in a similar atmosphere. Industrialism has had a profound effect, as Michaelsen points out, on workers not directly connected with it; professional groups, workers in trade and finance, service workers and farmers. Farming for example, "is becoming more and more a large-scale operation comparable to an industrial organization."¹ The large farm concentrates on turning out one particular product, it is in a sense mass producing. Modern inventions and machinery have radically affected it.

Insofar as other than industrial workers - such as clerical, service, and to a certain extent farm workers - are a part of a large and complex enterprise in which many of the techniques of the industrial enterprise ("rationalization", assembly line, etc.) have been adopted, they too face similar problems in their work to those of the industrial worker.²

Industrial patterns then, are pervasive in modern western society and even the vast areas of labour remote from the

¹ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p.145.

² Loc. cit.

factory have been pervaded by the atmosphere, methods, and tools of industry. "To deal with work in the modern world, therefore, means to deal with the industrial form of work, with whatever variations in the basic pattern may be appropriate."¹

B. Problems in Modern Industrial Work.

One major tendency in modern industrial work is the dehumanizing and depersonalizing effect upon man of mass production, mass communication, urbanization, and scientific technology. The worker becomes but a cog in the machine of industry. Mechanization, centralization, mass-men are the three major steps in technical evolution, according to Brunner.² Mass production involves the production of a large quantity of standardized goods by means of a highly developed system. This system contains a number of operations each performed as far as possible by a machine or a worker and a machine. Each operation becomes highly specialized and is essential to the efficiency of the total process. The total process is planned so that all these separate specialized operations contribute to the assembly and rapid production of a single product. The automobile industry with its giant assembly lines is one good example. The effect of this system of mass production upon the character and personality of the worker is vitally important. As Oldham³ says this problem is more

¹ R.S. Bilheimer, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 188.

² Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 10.

³ J.H. Oldham, Work in Modern Society, p. 27.

urgent today than ever before for the reservoir of men and women brought up and formed by a pre-industrial environment is nearly exhausted. The whole atmosphere of this system of production is impersonal. While the worker contacts many people in his work usually these contacts are rewarding only on an informal basis outside the plant. The atmosphere is impersonal in the sense that the worker is not working with his tools in his shop, nor can his labour make the product distinctive in any way. A highly standardized form of work is required of him. Mass production tends to depersonalize because the worker frequently becomes subordinate to the machine. This is particularly true with the automatic and semi-automatic machine and the worker who simply feeds it or takes the product away from it. It means he must adjust his rhythm of work to the machine. There is little opportunity for him to use his own initiative, to make choices and decisions, or to improve the quality of his work. He has little control over the speed and manner of his work. "The automatic machine", says Michaelson, "leaves little choice to the worker. It is not an extension of him; he is an extension to it."¹ Often then, the machine relieves men of thinking and willing. They have to "serve the machine" at a certain tempo and in a set manner. Modern technique means "unbearable noise and rush, ... it means the destruction

¹ R.S. Michaelson, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p.133.

of noble crafts with their standards of quality and their patriarchal working conditions ... it means the increasing domination of quantity over quality, not only in production itself but also in the formation of social, political and international power."¹

Mass production, especially when used for secular purposes aids depersonalization because of its emphasis on production. The worker in industrial enterprise frequently finds himself subordinate to production and profit. The demands of the competitive market force management to enlist all forces in seeking new methods in the most economical use of capital and labour. "In the drive for lower costs and greater output per man hour all the technical skills of industrial engineering and production planning are enlisted. The effort to break down work into simpler operations never ceases."² Oldham points out how the custom of shift working, typical of modern mass production, and the paying of a worker according to the number of hours 'put in' also furthers depersonalization. Machines may work twenty-four hours a day and since increased production and higher profits are the guiding motives men are frequently employed in three shifts to serve the machines. Thus the worker tends to be thought of as simply another necessary cog in the total production process, no more important than the machine. The unit of work

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 10.

² J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 13.

becomes three men in place of one. "The person has become an anonymous, interchangeable unit. He can be represented by a number."¹

Payment by the hour is not a practice invented by the modern industrial system but it is characteristic of this system, says Oldham, in the sense that a man is paid not for his services as a known individual person but for the number of anonymous interchangeable labour units he has contributed toward a project. Working time is disconnected from the person who did the job and attached to the piece of work. A man's work therefore, becomes divorced from his personal life. This aids depersonalization of the worker and makes his work less meaningful. Work thus ceases to be a sphere of moral and personal activity. "It no longer fosters, as it ought to do, the growth of personal character, by affording opportunities for personal decision, exercise of judgement, mastery of intractable material and growth of understanding and skill."²

The effects of mass production are not all evil. Modern industrial techniques have freed men from a great amount of physical drudgery and by enabling the increase of production have given men more free time and leisure. Though many old skills have been replaced by the machine new ones have become necessary for the effective operation and maintenance of the machines and the necessary organization involved in mass production. Further, modern industry

¹ Loc. cit.

² Ibid., p. 14.

has made the group the working unit in place of the individual and so to some degree provides its own antidote for its other dehumanizing and socially disruptive effects. Some factory groups have become so stable that workers would rather remain at a monotonous job in that group than break their relationship with it.¹ Men have new opportunities then, in modern industry to work with others and co-operate as a team in a joint enterprise. The rise of trade unionism, a product of modern industrialism, has called for initiative, purposiveness, comradeship, and loyalty. A paper presented to World Council of Churches in 1948 states that it would be hasty judgement "to regard modern forms of production as providing on the whole a less worthy form of human life or one less rich in possibilities of human growth."² Nonetheless mass production methods, in their present secular use tend on the whole toward the depersonalization of the worker and this is one of the problems that confronts Christianity in its attempt to restore the true relationship of work and vocation.

Mass communication has helped to spread and increase this impersonal atmosphere throughout western society. The yellow press, radio, television and modern movies coupled with new methods of transportation have helped to

¹ Ibid., p. 16.

² Quoted by J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 17, from The Church and the Disorder of Society, p. 34.

create what Brunner terms a universal "cliché-culture, the same films and musical hits from New York to Tokio, from Cape Town to Stockholm, the same illustrated magazines all over the world, the same menus, the same dance-tunes."¹

Urbanization and mass social organization, products of modern industrialism, increase the problem of depersonalization of man in our modern technical society.² Describing different aspects of a technical society Brunner refers to "uncounted millions of men massed together in souless giant cities, a proletariat without connection with nature, without a native heath or neighbourhood; ... (an) asphalt-culture",³ uniform and standarized. Man works, not in a small community of friends, says Michael- sen, but in a large, complex, and impersonal organization. He may be one of a thousand workers in a factory, with no personal contact with his employer. The worker "may be little more than an industrial private far removed from the general and with little or no contact with the colonels, the majors, and the captains. ... (His) work means little apart from that productive process and chain of command to which they are related."⁴ The worker in such a situa- tion has no sense of belonging to a community. Though working with others he is lonely and modern authors are

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 10.

² See The Church and the Secular World, p. 26, a re- port to the 14th General Council of the United Church of Canada.

³ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 129.

able to refer to the 'lonely crowd'. Many people today have lost their old roots because of a change in job and residence and hence old social ties and a sense of 'belonging' are lost. "The ideas, habits, emotions, loyalties, and associations of many workers have been shredded or discarded. Family ties under modern conditions have come to mean less."¹ Many workers are thrown in such a state of flux that they are no longer certain of what they want, and seem to be indifferent to any civic or group cause. Many come to feel: "'What's it to me? I'm not in on it, the crowd is running it, but not for me. They don't know me and I don't know them.'"²

The problem of depersonalization and 'mass mind' then, is one of the effects upon the worker of the growth of the industrial enterprise, mass production and secularization that the Christian Church must face. There is a fundamental dissociation, says Oldham,³ between the person of the worker and the work which he does. The industrial age appears to be passing into the administrative age and while industry strives to control nature for the service of man, it is the essence of administration, says Oldham, to seek control over men. This is much more than a logical extension of control of things though most people assume the contrary. To treat the control of men as if it were the same as the control of things is the direction in which

¹ R.N. Mould, Christianity Where Men Work, p. 48.

² Loc. cit.

³ See J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 26.

our technical society is moving. To do so "is a fatal blunder which robs life of its real meaning."¹ It is the opinion of Sir George Schuster² that the greatest need of our age is to make industrial work a meaningful part of a satisfactory life. This cannot be done by attempting to control the worker as if he were a machine or a purely economic being.³

We have seen how industry itself provides some antidotes for this dehumanizing tendency of a technical society. Michaelson points out how some industrial managers have attempted to aid these antidotes by showing a greater interest in the worker as a person. There is a growing awareness among administrators of the "human factor" in industry and various programmes of profit sharing schemes and worker advancement are being attempted. Unfortunately they are not too successful for frequently the worker regards them as gifts from the employer and not a true recognition of the workers' rights. Trade unions have been fairly successful in bringing about a close identification of the worker and manager.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that anyone who would speak to the industrial worker about exercising his Christian vocation in his work must first begin with an understanding of his subjection to a large production process over which he has little or no con-

¹ Ibid., p. 27.

² Quoted by J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 26.

³ For the effect of depersonalization and the development of 'mass mind' upon democracy see F.R. Barry, The Recovery of Man. For an artist's conception of the ultimate results of dehumanization and depersonalization see George Orwell, op. cit., and Kurt Vonnegut, op. cit.

trol and in which he is able to find little opportunity for the expression of his whole self.¹

Where can men find satisfying fellowship, knowledge concerning their own nature, worth and destiny, a feeling of oneness with all other men, the deep joy in work that really matters? The answer of the Christian Church is that these can be found only by seeing oneself in the light of God's everlasting love and justice as revealed to mankind by Jesus Christ and yielding heart and will and life to Him.²

Another problem of work in modern industrial society is the problem of motivation and incentive to work. Oldham points out³ that the motives impelling men to work are very complex, something we know little about. He shows clearly how we cannot distinguish simply between service for others, and selfish desire as motives that induce men to work. Usually there is an element of both service and selfishness involved. Why many different people do a faithful job everyday is difficult to ascertain. "Is it the stick? the carrot? or the sermon?" asks Dr. Mace.⁴ In Oldham's opinion one of the main motives involved in most men's work is "the gaining of status in one's own eyes through the value set on one's effort by others, particularly by one's work group or immediate associates."⁵

Brunner detects a lack of will-to-work in many areas of our industrial society and feels this lack of motivation comes from a deeper spiritual problem of the modern industrial worker. "Where there is at present a weakening

¹ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p.131.

² R.N. Mould, op. cit., pp. 49,50.

³ J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 22 ff.

⁴ Quoted by J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 23.

⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

of the will-to-work it is an outgrowth of our artificial civilisation and at bottom, a consequence of secularism."¹ Many find their jobs boring and monotonous. They find no satisfaction in their daily work. Often workers turn outside of their working life to find the emotional satisfaction they fail to gain in their jobs. Indeed many interpreters of the industrial scene feel the solution to meaningless and monotonous toil lies in a stronger concentration by the worker upon his leisure activities. But as both Michaelsen and Brunner point out this 'escape hatch' does not solve any questions about the meaning of work. The separation of work from all meaningful activities is not psychologically healthy. "Just as a man's work can be emptied of meaning, so can his leisure."² This turning to leisure activities for emotional satisfaction is evidence however that "much of the work of the industrial enterprise is of such a nature as to fail to give much opportunity for the satisfaction of the desire or urge to do something meaningful, stimulating, and satisfying in one's work."³

Michaelsen demonstrates that studies by various authorities show that the evidence is inconclusive for the assumption that mechanization has made a bored automaton of the worker. "The evidence gathered to date is

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 68.

² Ibid., p. 71.

³ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 135. At the same time however many people have found real satisfaction and meaning in industrial work.

not conclusive on the amount of detrimental influence caused by the worker's association with the machine."¹ One study seemed to indicate that when work is entirely automatic or completely manual boredom seldom occurred. It was in work involved in semi-automatic processes that boredom was most marked. While mechanization bears some relation to boredom it is not a direct one. Sir George Schuster thinks it is being unduly pessimistic to assume that modern industry and mass production with "the breakdown of skilled craftsman's jobs into repetitive, unskilled machine-minding operations, have made it impossible for the bulk of manual workers to find satisfying activity in their daily work."² He feels that further study of this problem will reveal new possibilities for men to find meaning in industrial work.

Oldham feels that lack of incentive in work is often the result of the fact that most workers do not select their occupation or career but generally have it determined by social forces beyond their control. "To those who thus drift into an occupation work cannot be expected to yield any great satisfaction, and there is evidence that among large classes of workers there is an entire lack of interest in their work."³ As we have already seen Brunner attributes this lack of satisfaction in work and poor motivation to a deeper spiritual problem, the loss of

¹ Ibid., p. 133.

² George Schuster, Christianity and Human Relations in Industry, p. 53, - see also p. 30.

³ J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 20.

the sense of the eternal meaning of life. This is probably the main and ultimate cause but Oldham is right in attributing at least part of the reason to "the divorce of work from the personal life and from life in the community,"¹ that is so prevalent in our technical society. In modern industrial production it is difficult for the worker to see his contribution, which seems so insignificant in light of the total production process, as being of any use to the community. This, and the repetitive nature of mass production work with its lack of opportunity for creative initiative, tend to make such work empty and meaningless.

In contrast to the problem of lack of will-to-work there is another problem in modern industry, 'work-fanaticism' and the need for leisure. Brunner feels that this 'work-fanaticism' is the result of a vacuum in the soul which one attempts to escape by working. It springs from the same root as the lack of will-to-work, the loss of the sense of the eternal meaning of life. "As nervous people cannot keep still, man with his unrestful soul cannot but work."² The desire for an increasing number of material possessions is also a strong factor but Brunner sees this as simply another aspect of the same fundamental need. The rush, noise, hustle and bustle of continuous activity so typical of western industrial

¹ Ibid., p. 15.

² Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 70.

society, particularly in America, no doubt has part of its roots in the "gospel of work".¹

Pieper traces the philosophical basis back to Antisthenes for the doctrine that hard work is what is good. "The inmost significance of the exaggerated value which is set upon hard work appears to be this: man seems to mistrust everything that is effortless; he can only enjoy, with a good conscience what he has acquired with toil and trouble; he refuses to have anything as a gift."² Antisthenes made Hercules, the god of superhuman labours, the human ideal and this ideal has retained a certain force, says Pieper, down through Erasmus and Kant and Carlyle, 'the prophet of the religion of work'.

All true Work is sacred; in all true Work, were it but true hand-labour, there is something of divineness. ... Who art thou that complainest of thy life of toil? Complain not. Look up, my wearied brother; all thy fellow Workmen there, in God's Eternity, surviving there, they alone surviving.³

The rugged individualism of laissez-faire capitalism then, stressed the doctrine of activism. This tendency to think of any activity as being superior to inactivity seems to be still prevalent throughout much of modern industrial society. As Brunner points out, those who are not inwardly seized by this 'work-fanaticism' nevertheless suffer from its consequences. "It is fair to say that Western man, from sheer absorption into work, no longer knows what it

¹ See chapt. II, p. 79.

² Josef Pieper, Leisure the Basis of Culture, p. 42.

³ Thomas Carlyle, "Sacredness of True Work", in T.O. Glencross, The Best of Carlyle, pp. 134, 135.

means to live."¹ This 'work-fanaticism', a running away from one's self by absorption in continual work and activity coupled with a wide-spread failure to use leisure time for re-creation, is one of the major problems in modern work which Christianity must face.

"The whole industrial field is bedevilled with suspicions based on past memories."² One of the major problems in modern industry is the tension and suspicion existing between labour and management. Workers regard any attempts at improvement by management with suspicion that the true motive behind such changes is to somehow get more work out of them and increase profits or because they have been forced to change by circumstances. Usually they doubt if such improvement is the result of a genuine change of heart in management. "Evidence indicates that wages, though important, are not the chief source of industrial disputes."³ Usually strikes are simply the boiling point of unsatisfactory relations between management and labour regarding such things as production schedules, worker output, discipline, absenteeism, the handling of grievances. "All of these matters stem from vital inner personality needs of human beings on the job, which if unmet create difficulties, first within the individual and then in his working relationships. Fair treatment by superiors invar-

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 70.

² George Schuster, op. cit., p. 75.

³ R.N. Mould, op. cit., p. 43.

iably heads the list of worker's concerns at any level in the plant."¹ Mould states that both management and labour feel misunderstood. On the whole both groups feel they are in the right and that the church and public misunderstand them. Each side claims they want only justice and fair play.

Oldham agrees with Professor Michel and Colonel Urwick that one of the major sources of industrial problems and tension between management and labour is that labour is not self-disciplined but subject to alien control. "The workers have no real responsibility for the conduct of the undertaking. Discipline must in consequence continue to be imposed from without, and therefore to rouse resentment, until the workers can find a form of organization which is felt to make sense and is in principle acceptable."² Resentment among workers is often aroused because regulations and rules are passed down to them from some superior without any explanation or reason for them. This gives the impression that such rules are simply the arbitrary will of the superior.

Another cause of much labour-management tension is the fact that labour union heads and management representatives in disputes are chosen and hired by their respective groups to 'win the battle' for their side. Too much compromise and understanding by either party is apt to

¹ Loc. cit.

² J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 25.

result in these representatives losing their jobs and respect among the group they are representing. Sir George Schuster feels this is a transition period in which the workers are groping for something to replace the old authoritarian system and the old status of the dependent wage earner; "but they have no clear conception of the pattern for a new system to take its place, nor are they yet able or ready fully to provide the skills and undertake the responsibilities which a more 'democratic' system would require."¹

The tension between labour and management, in Brunner's opinion, stems from the mass of workers becoming aware of the class distinction between labour and capital and at the same time being misled by the one-sidedness and exaggerations of Marx's theory of exploitation in which the "higher" class exploits the "lower". It is a problem which Christianity must face in proclaiming its gospel of work and vocation for it is difficult for even the Christian worker to have the right attitude toward his work and regard it as a 'divine calling' if he feels he is being exploited by the capitalist.

Insecurity and fear of unemployment are prevalent in modern industry. "Much worker reaction to industrialism can be described in terms of our almost constant quest for

¹ George Schuster, op. cit., p. 74.

security."¹ The worker seeks it through government and union. He is more concerned about security in his work and income than any questionable offer of unlimited opportunity. Brunner also feels that insecurity and unemployment are major causes of the crisis in industry today.² Insecurity felt by most workers does not just spring from fear of unemployment although this is the main source. "Technological displacement" is a term used by Michaelsen³ to describe the process of continual reorganization in industry as new machines are invented and more efficient means of production are discovered. This may or may not result in a loss of work to the worker but it involves a change of work and economic and psychological adjustment. This contributes to a feeling of insecurity. "Factory mobility" is another threat to the worker's security. Michaelsen describes this as the actual movement of a plant or factory to a new site. The worker must move with the plant.

By far the largest factor however in the worker's sense of insecurity is the fear of unemployment itself. The worker of the industrial enterprise has had to rely on that enterprise for work and apart from it he finds it difficult to exist. He has no tools of his own and is not trained for any work except some highly specialized

¹ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 141.

² Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 65.

³ R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 136.

fragment of the total mass production. If that production is no longer needed and ceases then the worker will find it difficult to get any other job because of his lack of qualifications. He is completely dependent upon the success of the industrial enterprise of which he is a part. But "unemployment is dreaded even where its economic effects are minimised by insurance."¹ This is because of its deep psychological and emotional effects. The worker is dependent upon his job not only for his economic needs but also for social prestige.² To lose his job is to lose social prestige even though he is economically secure. Meaningful work gives life the dignity of creativity and service. The unemployed worker feels as if he is a parasite on society. He loses self-esteem by being totally dependent on others. He does not like living off others when he himself is idle. "It is this fear of unemployment, inherent in our present economic system, which more than anything else makes (the industrial worker) hate this system and his working share in it."³ Yet many people feel that a degree of unemployment is desirable to provide a spur of fear to keep the worker giving his full effort.⁴ As Schuster points out this position cannot be met by a flat denial for it contains an element of

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 65.

² This section has been drawn largely from Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 65, and R.S. Michaelsen, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 135 ff.

³ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 45.

⁴ See George Schuster, op. cit., p. 77.

truth. Many people would not put forth full effort without this element of fear. The exponents of this view do not desire large scale unemployment but "just enough to give people a touch of the stick, a whiff of necessity." What is the Christian answer to this problem of insecurity and unemployment? It is a problem the church must face if it is to make the Biblical view of work and vocation relevant today. Schuster feels that we as Christians must play up to the best in human nature, not play down to the worst. "I am convinced that it must be both futile and wrong to seek to increase the stimulus to work by increasing the fear of unemployment", he writes. "We must find a better way."¹

We have dealt briefly with some of the major problems of modern industrial work. Some of these difficulties have been caused by technical specialization. It is clear however that technical specialization has brought many benefits to man as well. Michaelsen concludes that workers may find a deep sense of joy and satisfaction in mass production work. Technical specialization is not therefore completely evil in itself. It may be put to good or evil purposes and there are many indications that we have mishandled it so that it has produced undesirable results. "Western society has not proved capable of mastering the technical development in such a way that technical pro-

¹ Ibid., p. 79.

gress could be made serviceable to the human person and to the life of the community."¹ Mass production presents difficulties and challenges that must be faced before work may become meaningful and joyful but in Brunner's opinion these are not insurmountable. There is no need to discard technical advances to make work personal and meaningful. It is one part of the task of the Christian Church to help overcome these difficulties in work that are caused by technical specialization. What is more fundamental and ultimately the underlying root of most of modern work problems is the secularization of work, the emptiness and frustration in both work and leisure, the assumption that the worker is primarily "economic man". In other words the secularization of work partly encouraged by the Industrial Revolution has meant the increasingly wide spread dissociation of work from divine vocation and the treatment of the worker as economic man. Michaelson states that current problems in modern industrial work show that the worker's reaction to industrialism cannot be fully understood in terms of the concept "economic man".² The worker "seeks much more out of work than his paycheck. He wants some sense of his role in the total enterprise - a feeling that his work means something in itself, and that there is a future in it beyond the tangible financial return."³ While socialism and communism may help to solve

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 68.

² R.S. Michaelson, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 142.

³ Loc. cit.

some of the difficulties in work that technical specialization have created they do not recognize or attempt to deal with this deeper 'spiritual disorientation' of the worker, this separation of man's work from God's calling. For this reason, Brunner claims, both are inadequate. It is the great illusion of today, in his opinion, that nationalization or socialization of industry will do away with impersonalism and exploitation.

So long as the process of secularisation goes on as it has been doing now for two or three centuries, I see no hope whatever of regaining a right atmosphere of work. Whether or not we achieve a reasonable compromise between Capitalism and Socialism, the problem of the motive of work will continue to exist even if suppressed by compulsion. A true solution can only come through return to that conception of work which the gospel alone can give - the conception that work whatever it may be, is the service of God and of the community and therefore the expression of man's dignity.¹

The second major task of the church regarding work therefore, is to re-establish the true basic design underlying all work in the world from its present secular perversion. For work, says Bilheimer, is designed by God to accomplish for and with men, what he wants to accomplish. "Our failure is not that we have neglected to Christianize work, but rather that we have perverted the basic design underlying all work in the world."² Only the Christian Gospel, including its conception of work and vocation, can correct the secularization of work and restore the worker

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 69.

² R.S. Bilheimer, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 189.

to wholeness. The church must proclaim that gospel therefore and its conception of work and vocation, presenting the latter in terms relevant to the current work problems that men might hear God's call through their work and respond by dedicating in gratitude their whole lives including their work to God. Man's work must be restored to its proper place along with worship and leisure within man's vocation, God's calling to service.

C. The Christian Doctrine of Work and Vocation in Relation to These Problems.

In chapter one we attempted to outline the Biblical view of work and vocation. We will not attempt to repeat it now as a complete theological doctrine but will try to demonstrate briefly how this concept is relevant to the problems of modern industrial work outlined above, what the Christian attitude to these difficulties should be in light of the Biblical view of work and vocation.¹ The Christian view of man as essentially a person, a child of God beloved by him is certainly in opposition to the depersonalized concept of "economic man". This Christian concept "would make it impossible to treat men solely, or primarily, as anonymous, interchangeable units in a mechanical process."² The New Testament emphasizes the importance of the heart and motive of the worker rather

¹ For a theological statement of the Christian doctrine of work and vocation see J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 35 ff, and R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 159 ff.

² J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 40.

than the type of occupation in which he is engaged.¹ The Bible emphasizes the agent more than the act, the motive of the labourer more than the mode of his labour. Further, the Biblical position is quite clear that man's primary aim in work should not be maximum production but in the light of his divine vocation, service to God and man. As William Temple states it:

The real object of life is not to get the material means of comfort, pleasure and amusement, but to develop individual personalities in community ... We have turned the bounty of nature to the satisfaction of our greed, with the result that the whole economic system is now upside down. In God's order the object of all industry is the supply of men's wants. But in our world goods are produced not primarily to satisfy the consumer but to enrich the producer. The profit motive predominates over the service motive.²

Work so distorted by the sin of selfishness is bound to result in the bitterness, rivalry and strife that it has, according to the Biblical position.³ Certainly, as Oldham claims, if the Christian principle of work as being a part of a vocation of service were fully adopted and the selfish aim of production for profit eliminated depersonalization in industry would be greatly decreased. This would not eliminate, it is true, the depersonalizing effects of automatic machines and technical specialization but it would transform management's motives so that the lessening of such effects would be one of their chief concerns. If the prime concern of management was for the

¹ See chapt. I, p. 44.

² William Temple, Hope of a New World, pp. 16-17, as quoted by R.N. Mould, op. cit., p. 49.

³ See chapt. I, p. 37.

welfare of his workers as persons beloved of God and not production for profit a more personal atmosphere in industrial work would most certainly ensue.

The Christian understanding that man in his essential nature is man in community, and the Biblical concept of God calling man into a community with a shared vocation, certainly have bearing on the problem of depersonalization in work. The individual is called by God to repentance and faith and if he responds he is summoned to give service to God in love and gratitude. The believer is also called to a special function within the body of the church.¹ He is called to function in a unique way as a member of this community and contribute to the accomplishment of its shared vocation. Indeed the very calling comes from God in a social context through other people. "It comes as Luther insisted, through the persons with whom one stands in responsible relationships - through parents to children and through children to parents, through employer to worker and through worker to employer, through the ruler to his subjects and through subjects to those who rule them."² The believer through his daily labour then, may help as a member of the Body of Christ to fulfill the vocation or calling to service that is shared by all the members. The fellowship of the church through

¹ See chapt. I, p. 29.

² R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 164.

the unity of the spirit and the sense of deep comradeship that springs from sharing a divine vocation, yet with the awareness that each individual has a special function and contribution, would meet at a deep level the problem of loneliness, confusion and depersonalization that the modern worker faces without God.¹

The Biblical position regarding the relationship of work to vocation is extremely relevant to the problem of motivation in work. We have seen that one of the major difficulties in this regard is a frequent lack of motivation or will-to-work. Many industrial workers find their work monotonous and meaningless. They find it difficult to relate their small contribution in the whole production process to the final product and to see any purpose in work other than the need to earn a living. Brunner relates this to a lack of a sense of the eternal meaning of life. From the Biblical point of view work is significant because it is a natural and necessary God-appointed function and because it may serve as a vehicle of God's call and command and man's response to that command. The realization that work is not simply a necessary evil to be dispensed with if possible but a natural function, part of the created universe, the intention of God for man, gives work new meaning and dignity. The full adoption of this Biblical view would erase the stigma that is so often

¹ See also chapt. I, p. 43.

attached to labourers and industrial workers. Contrary to the Greek view, the Bible does not believe that contemplation and intellectual activity are higher functions. Work is not dishonorable for God works.¹ Even God incarnate in Jesus Christ was a humble carpenter. The acceptance of the fact that man must work to fill his natural and spiritual needs, that all work because it has become distorted by sin involves some drudgery and monotony helps prevent men from vainly seeking workless utopias and to face at least some degree of drudgery in their work with new understanding.²

Even repetitious and monotonous work acquires new meaning for the believer because work may act as the vehicle of God's Word. Surely work would receive a fresh significance for workmen with the experience of meeting God in their labour and co-operating with him. As we have already stated the Word of God does not come in isolation but through persons. It may come to the worker through his employer or fellow workers. Calhoun claims that "work is peculiarly well suited to embody in one concrete form the demand and the promise that are involved in the divine word to men."³ It embodies, says Calhoun, demands for responsible behaviour and the mastering of certain technical skills. It embodies demands for social responsibili-

¹ See chapt. I, p. 36.

² See chapt. I, p. 31.

³ R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 165. This section was drawn largely from Calhoun, pp. 164-169.

ties and moral requirements. Every worker is called upon in the face of the inexhaustible amount of work to be done to labour in humility and repentance. In daily labour no man is self-sufficient and so comes the demand for devotion and trust. This moral responsibility is called for in work because all workmen are dependent upon natural resources, cultural and social inheritance, and the co-operation of many others. These demands, intrinsic in work, for technical, social and moral responsibility, are rightly discerned as the Word of God for they are in keeping with his Word in Scripture. "In them, each worker confronts an inescapable imperative that is grounded neither in his own preferences nor in the particular dictates of his cultural community, but in the complex and fluid order of existence itself."¹ Work may also, in Calhoun's opinion, serve as a vehicle of promise. Daily labour is one way in which our self-regarding selves may be lost, absorbed in the doing of work that needs to be done. "In that perspective, work may without sentimentalism or vain-glory be held to embody the demand and the promise that in losing life we may find it."² If this is true then surely it is relevant to the problem of emptiness and lack of meaning in modern work.

Daily toil also derives significance, in the Christian point of view, from its relation to divine calling or voca-

¹ Ibid., p. 166.

² Ibid., p. 169.

tion. Work may be a vehicle of Christian response to God's calling, an area of life dedicated to God and the accomplishment of the special task he has assigned to each member of the church body. By redeeming life itself Christ redeems work. By making a man at one with God and through the gift of the Holy Spirit Christ enables the believer to respond in love and gratitude by dedicating his whole life to serving God. This includes the dedication and redemption of his work. Work so redeemed becomes a thing of joy with meaning and purpose. "A Christian no longer does his work with a sense of despair or for external rewards or to satisfy personal ambition or to provide security. He is free from these motives and desires."¹ Drudgery, hardships, limitations of skill and character remain but they have lost their power over the worker for he is not doing his work for his own gain but for Christ alone. Surely this Biblical truth is relevant and applicable to the problem of motivation in work.² We saw in chapter one how the Christian will use his work as one means of achieving the shared vocation of the church, the receiving, reflecting and spreading of the Word of God. He may do this partly by helping others through his work. Another way in which he may reflect the Word of God in his working life is by expressing his love and gratitude to God in the

¹ Chapt. 1, p. 42 ff.

² See also W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 204 ff. for an account of motivation in work.

full and free use of his talents God has given him.¹ The Biblical concept of work and vocation then, provides for the complete transformation by Christ of the heart and motive of the worker from selfish desire to loving service. "To the extent that his work springs from a will that is obedient, that work is redeemed. It is transferred from a realm of sin to a realm of grace, from the kingdom of frustration to the kingdom of joy. It becomes the right earthly means for fulfilling a heavenly calling."² The close connection between work and divine calling, the participation by believers in the vocation of Christ as members of his body gives work a meaning beyond our time. "The deepest meaning of life, including the meaning of work, is revealed only in the mystery of the Cross, which to human eyes seems to be the abyss of meaninglessness. The man Jesus Christ who died on this Cross will return as the living Lord in glory to be manifested to the whole earth."³ It is the conviction of Christians that at that time through judgment and grace our life and work will receive their ultimate meaning. The acceptance of the Biblical understanding of work and vocation as part of the full Christian Gospel would lead to new motivation and meaning for daily work.

The Christian view of work and vocation has signifi-

¹ See R.L. Calhoun, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p.169.

² Ibid., p. 71.

³ World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 29.

cance in regard to the problem of 'work-fanaticism' and leisure that was examined earlier. Though the Bible knows nothing of the modern problem of the use of leisure time¹ the place it assigns to work in life as a whole indicates its opposition to any 'work-fanaticism'. Man's chief end is not to work but to enjoy God forever. As Karl Barth states it: "It is not work which gives meaning to life, but it is life which gives meaning to work."² This is clear in the Biblical doctrine of the Sabbath. The right rhythm of life including both activity and rest is expressed in the fourth commandment. Leisure and worship also have their proper place in man's life. It is quite clear therefore, that the Bible does not condone the worship of constant work and activity that appears to be so wide-spread today. The meaning and significance given to life by the restored relationship with God made possible through Christ removes the urge of man to escape from empty living by complete absorption in continual work. At the same time, as Brunner points out,³ it removes the urge to escape from meaningless work into leisure. Both work and leisure are given content and purpose. The believer directing his work in love and gratitude toward the fulfilling of the divine vocation in which he shares realizes that leisure also has a place in this vocation, that work must be

¹ See chapt. I, p. 53 ff.

² As quoted in World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 28.

³ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 71.

seen in the perspective of eternal rest. With the realization that he is co-operating with God in his work, he is ready through faith to rest assured that the final victory and accomplishment of his vocation is in the hands of God. The believer's humility arising from the understanding of his sinfulness in contrast to the perfection of God helps him to see in true perspective his place in the scheme of things. Though his work is important God's whole work and purpose does not depend completely upon it. Thus, the believer is freed from a common source of constant anxiety and urge to rush. He is able to rest as well as work without continually fretting and worrying, but with interest and concern.

The inner aloofness from work so badly needed in our age of hectic rush may be promoted by quietness and play but it has its deepest roots in Christian worship. The Bible directs our leisure activity to this end. "Here, in meaningful anticipation of the Kingdom, the God is worshipped in Whom through Jesus Christ everything is accomplished. There is no place for hurry, hectic activity and hard labor, only for repentance and gratitude in joyousness."¹ The Christian doctrine of work and vocation speaks very directly to our modern problem of leisure and 'work-fanaticism'. "Man is created by God in such a way that he needs the Sabbath. Where the

¹ World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 29.

Sabbath-rest disappears, the human character of life also disappears."¹

Labour-management tension is the fourth major problem typical of industrial work that we have discussed. The Christian Gospel and view of work is relevant to this problem also. Though of course the Bible gives no direct guidance on industrial labour-management disputes the problem is fundamentally one of human relationships,² and on this matter the Bible speaks quite distinctly. Schuster outlines three major human relationships in industry:

First, the behaviour of 'management' to 'workers'; secondly, the response of the workers (their attitude to management and to their work); and, thirdly, the relations of the workers with each other (the association and co-operation of the individual with his fellow workers, which includes the important matter of relations with trade unions).³

Schuster goes on to point out that mere good-will is not enough to remove the existing tension but that we must devote all our intellectual ability to finding practicable ways and means for straightening out the disputes and suspicions between labour and management. This is true, but the adoption of Jesus' second great commandment to love one's neighbour, in light of the first commandment to love God, by both parties would certainly have a profound effect upon the relationships of the two groups. The application of self-giving love and the treatment of

¹ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 70.

² See George Schuster, op. cit. - much of this section is drawn from his work.

³ Ibid., p. 17.

each individual as a human personality whose welfare in the highest sense must be regarded as an end in itself would have profound effects.¹ It would provide a true motive and basis for the clear-headed seeking of solutions to these problems. With their emphasis on production and not the individual as an end in himself both communism and capitalism are doomed ultimately to fail in the removal of this tension though they may achieve a measure of success. Christianity is not only relevant then, to this problem of labour-management tension but a re-emphasis on the work and vocation aspect of its gospel is badly needed. Sir George Schuster writes,

I have wished to voice my own profound conviction that it is possible to combine the efficient conduct of industry with the fulfillment of these Christian principles, and that the first duty of all who are, in any capacity, concerned with the conduct of industry is to devote thought to devising practical methods for achieving this high purpose.²

Finally, the Christian view of work and vocation implies a certain attitude to the problem of insecurity in work and unemployment. As with the other problems no cut and dried solution to it is offered but the motive for seeking a solution is given and the direction the solution should take is implied. We have already pointed out that according to the Biblical view the Christian, his work redeemed by Christ, and seen in the light of his divine

¹ See B.Y. Landis and James Myers, Christianity and Work, p. 30, for a good example of this.

² George Schuster, op. cit., p. 125.

vocation, is freed from personal ambition¹ and the motivating power of material security.² While he will be concerned about the material well-being of his family and loved ones the fear of insecurity will not grip him and act as the basic motive for his work. At the same time the Biblical view of work as a God-appointed function, something necessary for the fulfilment of man's basic needs makes unemployment an evil.³ Every man should have the opportunity to work. "If labor is to be divine, human society must assure full employment... Unemployment is not just an economic phenomenon - it is a moral evil. It must be abolished and full employment assured to all who are able and willing to work."⁴ If work is part of the Creator's intention for man in the world then to be denied work is to be treated as less than human. Christians therefore, could never support the idea of increasing the stimulus to work by creating the fear of unemployment with a moderate measure of unemployment. The Biblical doctrine of work implies then, that while the Christian should not fearfully strive for material security himself, while this should not be his basic motive, yet he should endeavour to see that every man has the opportunity to regular, socially necessary work.⁵ This work must be of

¹ For an excellent section on the place of personal ambition in Christian vocation, see W.R. Forrester, op. cit., p. 32 ff.

² See chapt. I, p. 42.

³ See chapt. I, p. 31 ff.

⁴ B.Y. Landis and James Myers, op. cit., p. 31.

⁵ See G.B. Oxnam, The Christian's Vocation.

the sort that can be done in a framework and context in which the Christian meaning of life and responsibility to God and service to men is not frustrated and denied.

"There may be forms of work that are without meaning, and cannot be given meaning, because they provide no scope for the expression of man's nature as a free and responsible person."¹ The Christian should strive to give men employed in such work an opportunity for more meaningful employment.²

It is clear from chapter one that there is a definite Biblical view regarding work and vocation. We have endeavored to show that this aspect of the Christian gospel has been on the whole, since the Reformation, first distorted and then neglected and that this distortion and neglect have allowed some of the problems in industrial work to occur. "Neither the crazy technical development, with its complete disregard for man and its mania of production for the sake of production and profit, nor the 'capitalistic system', with its disregard for human personality and community, could have originated in a truly Christian civilisation."³ In the Middle Ages the church "wanted the sacred to dominate the secular and rob it of its intrinsic rights in its own proper sphere. It also made the mistake of identifying the sacred with the ecclesiastical."⁴ The Reformation repudiated the double standard

¹ J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 50.

² This does not mean that drudgery and monotony would necessarily be removed.

³ Emil Brunner, op. cit., p. 68.

⁴ J.H. Oldham, op. cit., pp. 44,45.

of morals but its attempt to penetrate, vitalize and sanctify secular life and activities, rather than dominate them was never fully completed. "Protestant thought has remained wavering and uncertain in its attitude to the secular life"¹ and this plus the emmancipation of the secular from the domination of the sacred has resulted in 'the complete autonomy of the secular'. Reinhold Niebuhr has called this the almost complete triumph of the Renaissance over the Reformation.² Writes J.O. Nelson:

Occupational life has in this century been self-sufficient enough to relegate religion to the margins of personal and emotional life, denying it the center. As a result, Christianity, or any other form of faith has found itself domesticated in the home, in private morality, and in Sunday services, but firmly fenced off from daily work.³

He goes on to outline four specific ways in which job life has thus vitiated religious life, evidence of the distortion and neglect by the church itself, of the true Biblical doctrine of work and vocation.⁴ First, the fact that a call of God has come to mean as far as the majority are concerned a call to the ministry. Secondly, Nelson thinks that for many laymen the symbols and sacraments of the church have lost a great deal of their meaning. Their relation to the life of the believer is in many cases known to the minister alone. Thirdly, many laymen have left the church and entered into secular

¹ Ibid., p. 45.

² Reinhold Niebuhr, Nature and Destiny of Man, vol. 2, pp. 181-183, as referred to by J.H. Oldham, op. cit. p. 45.

³ J.O. Nelson, op. cit., p. 23.

⁴ Loc. cit.

fellowships. Trueblood says that "the province of labor is so far lost that, far from thinking of itself as a part of the Christian movement, it has set itself up as a genuine rival, in the competition for loyalty."¹ Finally, in Nelson's words, the "crowning result of the alienation of daily job life from religion is that modern man has set off in anxious pursuit of material and physical substitutes for spiritual realities."² The problems of modern industrial work outlined above support this analysis.

It seems clear then, that the church has become increasingly separated from daily life and that the full doctrine of Christian work and vocation has been neglected. We have attempted to show that this doctrine is indeed relevant to problems in modern work and that a re-emphasis upon it is badly needed. The church must proclaim anew the true Christian view of work and vocation in terms relevant to the problems of modern industrial work. This is a vital part of the gospel which the church is called to reflect and bring to others. This is a part of its mission. If the church fails to respond to God's call and forgets her mission, bringing the Word only to the 'upper classes' God will raise up a new instrument to accomplish his purpose. "If the church were to become again laymen, expressing their concerns in shared fellow-

¹ Elton Trueblood, Your Other Vocation, p. 16.

² J.O. Nelson, op. cit., p. 26 - see also p. 125 ff.

ship, bringing their work lives week after week into the Divine presence, both church life and job life would reclaim a unity and glory which they largely lack today."¹

D. A New Strategy for the Church.

It is not within the scope of this paper to deal extensively with how the church should set about proclaiming this neglected element of its mission. Bilheimer suggests that it will involve more than simply an adjustment of techniques or new programme. "A new strategy is demanded, however, and we suggest that it should involve a fundamental rethinking of the pattern of operations in contemporary church life."² We must, says Bilheimer, "again establish the Church as a community in the world and not a group belonging to an organization."³ We in the church should recapture the vision of the church as a community of believers through which God makes his appeal. We must realize that the church is more than a group of people belonging to a formal organization but that it is the Body of Christ, with Christ himself as the Head, that it is called by God to carry on the redemptive work of Christ in the world. Christians are individual members of this Body each with a task to perform to contribute to the accomplishing of the church's vocation. We should re-establish the church as the "third race", in the world but not conforming to

¹ Loc. cit.

² R.S. Bilheimer, in J.O. Nelson, ed., op. cit., p. 190. For a discussion of a Christian strategy see p. 186 ff.

³ Ibid., p. 203.

the world, so that it may again become the sign and symbol of the coming kingdom. "It must be our purpose to make a conscious and significant connection between the Gospel and the work we are called upon to do throughout our life."¹ Christians must be concerned as ambassadors for Christ, as members of his Body, first to learn how they may act rightly as workers in secular working conditions, in a non-Christian society. Secondly, they must study what their duty is in regard to changing the situation, the secular society and secular working conditions they face. Then may the church penetrate these areas of life with its witness rather than dominating them or separating itself from them and so accomplish, under the leadership of Christ, this neglected aspect of its mission as his Body.

The problem of how Christians should act as workers in non-Christian situations must be worked out with the aid of laymen and ministers who know the practical situations involved. Most authors writing on this subject seem to agree with Oldham that "theology can tell us what is the substance of the Christian message, but to know at what points the Christian faith bears directly on the problems that men encounter and the decisions that they have to make in modern society we have to look to those who live and act in the world of secular endeavour."² Still, the basis of the Christian attitude and action to-

¹ Ibid., p. 206.

² J.H. Oldham, op. cit., p. 33.

wards such problems will rest on the Biblical doctrine of work and the quality and direction of human living set forth there. One of the major difficulties Christian laymen and women will have to face in studying their course of action in modern work situations is the ambiguity of right and wrong in so many of these situations. The Christian course of action is frequently difficult for the individual to discern in such situations as the voluntary "slow-down" whereby a certain speed of production is agreed upon by the workers as a form of protection against the raising of the basic level of production making it correspondingly difficult to earn piece-work benefits. Other similar difficult situations are outlined by Alexander Miller including "agreed dishonesty" to keep peace with the management, union "rigging" and the "duty of unneighbourliness". In the latter case, what does a Christian do when in times of unemployment he must not only compromise with personal dishonesty but beat his neighbour out of a job if he and his family are to exist? Similar morally ambiguous situations are faced by farmers, business men and professional men in their working situations. The church must help workers to live as Christians in a non-Christian society. Paul's advice to slaves is extremely relevant for this difficulty. Other problems involved for the Christian worker include stewardship of property and spending, the right to income, what occupations should

Christians as Christians not pursue?¹ To take Christian vocation seriously, says Miller "may mean some very costly decisions indeed, as when a man or woman gives up a livelihood for conscience' sake. The weight of such decisions ought to fall, not solely on the individual or his family, but in some fashion on the community of Christians."²

The problem of changing a secular society and secular working conditions to situations more favourably Christian - that is, to a "social order in which men may glorify God in their work and may live in godly relation to one another and to the world of God's making"³ - is an ancient one. It too is beset with difficulties and dangers. Christianity must not be identified with any one political party or movement and yet "Christians can express their solidarity in the world through their common witness on political and economic issues."⁴ Perhaps as the Commission of World Council of Churches on social questions suggested this will involve more thinking together on the part of Christians about their convictions concerning political and economic issues than they have done in the past. How shall we establish economic and social justice, yet retain our freedoms? What is the proper balance between

¹ These and other problems are discussed in practical terms in R.N. Mould, op. cit., G.B. Oxnam, op. cit., Report of the North American Lay Conference, op. cit., Alexander Miller, op. cit., B.Y. Landis and James Myers, op. cit., George Schuster, op. cit., and W.M. Childs and Douglass Cater, op. cit.

² Alexander Miller, op. cit., p. 48.

³ Ibid., p. 56.

⁴ World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "Social Questions", p. 63.

restriction and freedom in a Christian society?¹ These are questions Christians must face and strive to answer if they are to improve working conditions. Miller feels that it is not only a Christian worker's duty to criticize his job but to act upon that criticism in the light of the general good. Rather than striving for domination of social and political life by entering these arenas as a formal organization, the church, in Miller's opinion, must make the Christian gospel applicable to such areas of life so that individual members may enter into these fields as Christians, 'ambassadors for Christ'. Though it is difficult for Christians to decide what political party they should be active in Miller feels that "two months of active membership in any political group - even if it turned out to be the wrong side - is more instructive than two years spent in reading books on the subject or of brooding abstractly on the relationship of Christianity to politics."² The church must, then, if it is to fulfill its mission, be concerned with problems endeavouring to seek a Christian solution. By becoming aware of such problems and gathering together as members for mutual guidance and instruction on these difficulties, individual Christians may go forth to witness in these areas of industrial and political activity for Christ and for the church. "They will try to wage the struggle for justice without hate and by

¹ See R.N. Mould, op. cit., p. 78 ff.

² Alexander Miller, op. cit., p. 57.

methods that will not engender hate ... Where they fight, they will fight without bitterness and with eagerness for reconciliation. But reconciliation can come only after justice is satisfied, not before."¹ In this way the church will be enabled to penetrate the political and industrial fields without the heteronomic domination of the Middle Ages, and create working conditions that are more Christian.

The Biblical vision regarding work and vocation then, has been unduly distorted or neglected. Work has become generally secularized. The church must re-emphasize this aspect of its Gospel because it is part of its divine vocation and because it is so badly needed in the problems of modern industrial work.

E. Signs of Hope.

There are signs that the church is becoming increasingly aware of the distortion and neglect of the Christian doctrine of work and vocation and attempting to proclaim it and witness to it in terms relevant to modern working situations. Lay conferences on work like the North American Lay Conference held in Buffalo in 1952 are becoming more numerous. There occupational groups such as attorneys, farmers and insurance men studied the difficulties involved in Christian witness in their respective occupations. In the Conference Message which was unanimously

¹ Loc. cit.

adopted by the Conference the success of the project was attested. "We have been inspired at the North American Lay Conference on the Christian and His Daily Work, held in Buffalo, N.Y., February 21-24, 1952. We caught a new vision of our daily work as we studied it in the light of God's will and purpose."¹ The development of the industrial chaplaincy, the worker-priest movement of the Roman Catholic Church and the organization of such groups as the National Religion and Labor Foundation with the purpose of promoting friendships between religious and labour groups is evidence of the growing concern for this problem in the United States. A source of much inspiration in this field is the famous project of the Iona Community in Scotland. This project founded by George MacLeod in 1938 is an attempt to forge the church's faith and daily toil. A number of workers from Glasgow and ministers spent part of each summer rebuilding the old abandoned abbey of St. Columba on Iona.² The combination of daily manual labour for everyone plus regular periods for worship, study and a new evangelism has led to deep probings in the meanings of faith and church for modern industrial society. Miller sees this project as a symbol of the Reformation view of work and vocation just as the precious two abbeys there were representative of the church's view of their respective periods towards the problem. "Here, in a new way,

¹ Report of the North American Lay Conference, op. cit., p. 11.

² See chapt. II, pp. 63,64, for the development of Christianity on Iona.

is the recovery of the Celtic vision. It affirms that the whole people, and the whole life of the whole people, are under the direct rule of Christ."¹ A similar project in the United States, largely inspired by Iona, is known as Kirkridge, under the leadership of J.O. Nelson, Life Work Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches.

Space does not permit the examination of the strong lay movements within the church in Britain and Europe. Lay conferences on work and vocation held in Sweden, Germany, Holland, France, Britain, Canada and India, the rise of study groups and discussions on this subject, the growth of training centers for Christian industrial leaders, the whole development of cells within the church to deal with this and other social problems are all 'signs of hope' that the church is awakening and beginning to act on the problem of work and vocation. The setting up of a preparatory commission on "The Laity - The Christian in His Vocation" to report to the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A., August, 1954, shows the world-wide concern of the church for this problem. This is the first time that such a subject has been put before an ecumenical gathering with such great emphasis.

This in itself is indicative of the fact that in many churches all over the world in recent years some fresh movement has arisen, not organized from above

¹ Alexander Miller, op. cit., p. 28.

but born of a widely and deeply felt need on the part of the church to meet man in the modern world where he really lives and of a new joyousness on the part of its members in witnessing to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord of all realms of life.¹

¹ World Council of Churches Assembly, op. cit., "The Laity", p. 1.

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